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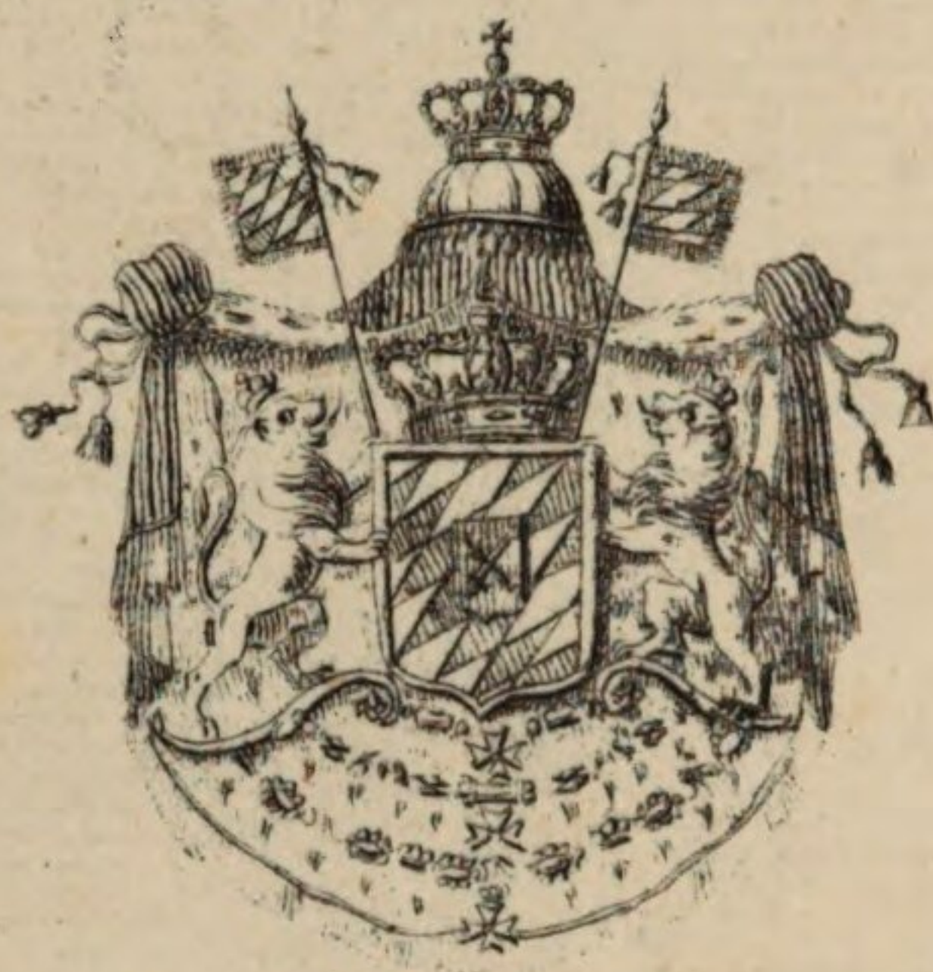

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AYESHA,

THE MAID OF KARS.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "ZOHRAB," "HAJJI BABA," &c.

Il y a plaisir d'être dans un vaisseau battu de l'orage lorsqu'on est sûr qu'il ne périra point.—*Pensees de Blaise Pascal.*

IN THREE VOLUMES

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AYESHA,

THE MAID OF KARS.

CHAPTER I.

Cain. It burns
My brow; but nought to that which is within it.

BYRON.

IN due time Mustafa returned with letters from the British Minister in Persia, containing the required passport and the letters of credit. He was also the bearer of a letter to the commander-in-chief from the same hand, requesting that Lord Osmond might meet with every distinction on the part of his excellency, as the representative of one of the noblest families of England, and passing such high eulogiums upon his character that the

General, after its perusal, hastened to wait upon Osmond with all due state and formality, and endeavoured by his attentions to do away every appearance of slight which his former treatment might have betrayed. He had already admitted him to his table, but now he made it a point to give him a public entertainment, in which his own health, as well as that of his Sovereign, was drunk with every demonstration of respect. He ordered a general review of his troops, in order to do him honour; and so loaded him with attentions that Osmond began in right earnest to think of departure.

The last ceremony which the commander-in-chief wished Osmond to honour with his presence, was the execution of the wretch Cara Bey, who had been condemned to be shot. It was intended to be an exhibition of the most imposing nature, in order that the report of it might spread far and wide throughout that part of Asia, and produce a proper impression upon the minds of the lawless and ill-intentioned. It was to take place in face of

the whole army, marshaled in array around the devoted man. From distant parts of Georgia, particularly from the mountainous tribes of the Caucasus, from Carabagh, Sheki, and Shamaki, and, in short, from all the surrounding districts, the people were invited to attend. Cara Bey was a name so well known, that when it was reported that he had fallen into the hands of the Russians, and was about to be put to death, it required but little incentive to bring people together. So many individuals had been despoiled by him, and so many families ruined or rendered miserable by his atrocities, that a universal burst of satisfaction at his capture was expressed, and it was pronounced that a common death was too good for him.

The day before the execution, Ayesha, at the instigation of Zabetta, had fulfilled her intention of persuading Osmond to interpose with the commander-in-chief to save the wretch's life. It required but little to touch his heart; for benevolence and tenderness were among his principal characteristics: he held in abhor-

rence every act approaching to violence or cruelty; always on the forgiving side, there was ever a leaning in his mind towards the unfortunate, however wicked or criminal they might be. He was on all occasions ready to make allowances for temptation acting upon the weakness of our nature. The best of men, he was aware, require constant watchfulness to preserve them in the path of duty; what allowances ought not then to be made for such a poor benighted creature as the present offender? Born and educated in the grossest of religious beliefs; a very child of Satan by birth; and exercising a profession which, among the rude people with whom he lived, was not only permitted but esteemed honourable; certainly there was much in the all-forgiving doctrines of Christianity to sanction excuse and pardon.

It required, then, but little persuasion on the part of Ayesha to influence her lover to do that to which his principles as well as his inclination already prompted him. Her heart swelled with affection, and tears flowed

from her eyes, when she remarked how much his feelings responded to her own; and when at length he agreed to second her wishes, and to busy himself in obtaining a reprieve of the awful sentence, she was but too happy to seal her gratitude with the sincerity of a lover's embrace. Zabetta, who had watched the progress of her concerted stratagem, with all the wile of the serpent in her heart, although with the innocence of the dove in her aspect, when she observed this last proof of its success, could have clapped her hands with joy; but she kept her real feelings to herself, and exclaimed, when Osmond informed her of his determination, "May you live for ever, O Effendi! but let us hope that you may never have to repent of your kindness. The wretch! life from your hands ought to be more bitter to him than death from the executioner!"

The Russian General had not ceased to extol Osmond's conduct in the whole business of the capture of Cara Bey and his castle, as something so heroic, generous, and disinterested, that he quite persecuted him to ask some boon

from the hands of his Emperor; assuring him at the same time, that he would guarantee its being granted, accompanied by the thanks of his whole nation. In the General's estimation, and, indeed it may be said, in that of his countrymen, honours and distinctions were the rewards most prized; and he would, in truth, have wished to see his friend Osmond decorated in the same manner as himself; such was the high estimation in which he held him. But Osmond was unconcerned about personal distinctions; all he required was, that his gallant young companion in suffering, Ivanovitch, should receive those marks of his sovereign's favour which might have been awarded to himself, and, moreover, that every one of the Russians who had come to his assistance when he was in distress, might also be distinguished by some token of reward. To these terms the General willingly submitted, and Osmond was delighted to see the man whom he had once been obliged to use so roughly, the happiest of Russian mortals.

On the very morning of the execution, when

the marching of the troops to their different stations was already heard, and the whole camp was teeming with preparation and curiosity, Osmond walked to the tent of the commander-in-chief, and demanded an audience. No sooner was his presence announced than he was introduced. The General was already arrayed in his fullest uniform and decorations; his staff wore their best; there was great attention given to display. He received Osmond in the kindest manner, took both his hands into his own, and kissed both sides of his cheeks. "My friend," said he, "we are now going to put the finishing hand to the extraordinary work begun by you. You must attend to see that it be well done."

"I am quite ashamed of your unceasing kindness," said Osmond; "but I fear that our ideas of how the work which you are about to accomplish ought to be finished, will be at variance when I explain myself."

"How!" said the old man, his face beaming with good-nature; "we have agreed hitherto in all things, we cannot disagree now."

"Hear me," said Osmond: "I hope you will agree with me to the last. You have frequently pressed me to require a boon at your hands; I am more than grateful, and I would have acceded to your request were it only to please you, but that I had really nothing to ask. But now I have a petition to make, and I am sure you will grant it, for it is in your power."

"What is it?" said the General, with pleasure and alacrity in his accent and manner.

"It is this," said Osmond, most impressively;—"that you spare your prisoner's life—that you allow Cara Bey to live and be free."

"How!" exclaimed the old man, opening his eyes in astonishment. "Save his life! how can such a thing be done now? Is not all the country prepared to witness his doom? have we not made preparations for this event greater than were ever made before; and shall we not prove the laughingstock of all the world, if they end in nothing—in an act of weakness? Believe me, my friend, I will do any and

every thing to meet your wishes, but it seems to me that you have here allowed the goodness of your heart to get the better of your judgment."

"It may be as you say," said Osmond, "and I will not willingly put my judgment in competition with yours; but hear my reasons for the request I make, and you shall decide whether I am right or wrong. But for that man, I should probably be at this moment wasting my existence in a Turkish prison at Kars. At first he received me and gave me protection, and although his subsequent conduct cancelled my first obligations, still I cannot bring my conscience to acquiesce in his death; I cannot bring myself to be a party to it. These are my scruples; I am sure, in making them known to you, I am confiding them to the breast of an upright man."

With some hesitation, and after a pause, the General said, "You have said enough to shake my resolution, whilst you have increased my respect for your character; but think of my situation. Here am I governor-general and

commander-in-chief of this great country, which the Emperor has confided to my management, with the power of life and death in my hands. The numerous and various tribes which I have to control, and to keep in constant check, watch my actions as foxes do the lion. Wild as the winds of heaven, living in mountains difficult of access, full of deceit, stratagem, and resource, if they perceive any weakness or want of decision in my conduct, they are ever ready to revolt; forgive their delinquencies but once, they look upon forgiveness as their right, and act in their lawless warfare as if no retribution were at hand. What is to be done in this advanced stage of our proceeding?"

"I fully enter into your views," said Osmond, "and I should be sorry to interpose my petty interests when yours of so much greater importance are at stake; but let me observe, that I differ from you when you say that, by showing mercy, you show weakness. I have always looked upon it that mercy, properly exercised by the hand of power, increases strength. It may be looked upon as weakness by the

foolish and the thoughtless, but those who know what power means, know best how to appreciate an act of mercy; and the strength of a nation consists, not in the fools, but in the wise heads which it contains. Marshal the latter on your side, add them to the bayonets by which you are surrounded, and you will more easily quiet the rebellious, and more essentially increase your moral power, (which is, after all, the greatest strength,) than if your executioner's scimitar were always drawn and always at work."

The old general rubbed his eyes upon hearing this doctrine, and knew not how to answer. He was staggered in his opinion, but still he only saw before him the great preparations which he had made, and the consequent disappointment which would ensue were he to allow them to go for nought. At length he said, "But something must be done; we cannot dismiss all this collected world, without some exhibition!"

"No, no," said Osmond; "it is quite right that there should be as solemn an exhibition of

your power as possible, which will render more impressive the solemnity of the mercy you intend to grant. At the moment when the wretch expects his death, let his shackles be knocked off, and let him be set free, a wanderer and an outcast, with this proclamation ringing in his ears, 'As his hand was against every man, so let every man's hand be against him.' Set a mark upon him, as a mark was set upon Cain, and, like him, let him be a wanderer and a fugitive. Many there are whose blood he has spilled, who will be ready to take vengeance; but let the blood be off my head, and perhaps you will feel happy that it is off yours. He can no longer do you harm; his castle is in your hands; his gang is dispersed; and a branded wretch, without wealth, friends, or a home, will never again be likely to find adherents."

The discussion on this subject lasted for some time, for the General was not at all disposed to accede to Osmond's wishes; but as the moment approached when Cara Bey's doom must be settled in one manner or another,

they were obliged to separate, and the result of their deliberations was kept secret.

The sun had risen about an hour above the summits of the mountains which surrounded the valley of the encamped army, when everything was in readiness for the execution of the criminal. The troops, with drums muffled and with every military solemnity practised in the awful case of death, were drawn up in a semi-circle in front of the camp, upon an open space of verdure; and their whole appearance, flanked by artillery, their bayonets bristling in the sun, and their ranks varied by the admixture of their waving standards, gave an impressive idea of the power of Russia, as it stood in the wilds of a country so distant from the seat of her rule. Behind the line of troops might be seen the mass of natives who had come to witness the scene; some seated in groups upon rising ground, others stealing a look between the soldiers' ranks, and others encroaching too much upon the spot appointed for the execution. Here might be seen Georgians, Circassians, Imeretians, men of the Ossi tribe, Tuschians,

and Lesguis. The Georgian, known by his close vest and dagger on his thigh; the Circassian, by his helmet of steel, his chain-armour, and his straight sword; the Imeretian by his crimson dog's-eared cap, his many chains, and his sword covered over like an umbrella; the Ossian by his shirt and hairy *yapuncheh*, or cloak; the Tuschian, by his needy and vagabond look, carrying a spear, which is a mark of obligation to avenge the blood of one of his relations; and the Lesguian, remarkable for his peculiarly wild and ferocious appearance. Besides these, there were Armenians, a few Jews, men from the Carabagh with their large sheep-skin caps, Turks, and Persians. In short, the congregated mass, with its variety of dress, colours, features, and complexion, mixed with the never-failing veil of the women, might be compared to a collection of flowers planted in different beds, the flowers of each bed having their separate name and quality.

This assembly had been kept for some time in expectation, and the sun had made consider-

able progress in its ascent, when at length the commander-in-chief, surrounded by his staff, and accompanied by Osmond, who walked close to him, and who, from his Oriental costume, attracted the particular attention of the multitude, made his appearance, under the salute of the whole line. Much was said, and much was ordered, ere the prisoner was allowed to appear. A band of six grenadiers, chosen for being good marksmen, were drawn out in front of the line, to carry the sentence into effect. A halberd, stuck in the ground, marked the spot where the prisoner was to kneel: a wooden coffin was at hand, under the charge of two corporals. A dead silence ensued as the time drew near for the prisoner's approach. At length, one of the brazen field-pieces was fired as a signal, and, shortly after, the condemned man was seen walking at a slow pace, with a guard of five grenadiers before him, and five behind him, whilst a band of muffled drums beat a solemn march appropriate to the occasion. The culprit was worn and haggard; his naturally

saturnine complexion was now become a livid white, the blackness of his hair and beard contrasting strongly with the unhealthy hue. In the cast of his countenance, although there was an expression of fear, still there was a lurking beam of hope. He walked erect, eyed the scene before him with composure, and seemed to say by his gesture, "I am not to die."

Nothing was heard save the clanking of his irons and the beat of the muffled drum. The breathless silence of the assembly, and their looks of intense interest, increased by the effect of the surrounding scenery, were in every way most striking and impressive. When he had reached the halberd, the officer commanding the firing-party stepped up to him, and, obliging him to kneel, tied the fatal handkerchief over his eyes. And now it was remarked that an universal tremor seized his frame. He began to think that all hope was gone. He became faint: he would have cried out for mercy. Then he heard the words "Make ready!" followed by the clashing of

the muskets and the ominous click of the lock. A scream of despair came from the wretched man, and was heard in thrilling echo all around. The word "Present!" was loudly given, and the six muskets were pointed directly at the breast of the prisoner, and would have been followed by the last doom — "Fire," but the voice of the commander-in-chief was heard, strong and decisive — "Recover arms." The order was obeyed, and a general pause ensued; but the wretch, upon hearing the last words, fell flat with his face to the ground, in a state of insensibility.

The effect of this action upon the spectators was almost as great as if he had actually been shot. A general murmur and agitation were produced by the various feelings which pervaded the assembly. After some delay, during which Cara Bey had in some measure recovered his senses, and soon after his self-possession, the commander-in-chief, accompanied by Osmond, in great form, followed by his staff and all the principal officers of the army, walked towards the prisoner. Having formed a circle

round him, he ordered the handkerchief to be withdrawn, allowed him to take a full survey of the scene before him, and then addressed him, through the medium of an interpreter, in the following words:—

"Wretched man! in but a few minutes your miserable soul would have been plunged into the eternity of another world, to meet the reward of the many crimes which you have committed in this;—but, through the intercession of this brave man," pointing to Lord Osmond, "and by God's mercy, your life has been saved. However, as you have shown yourself a public pest, so a mark of infamy must be fixed upon you, that you may be shunned by your fellow-creatures. You will be branded as a villain ought to be, and this proclamation will go throughout the country, 'As the wanderer Cara Bey's hand was against every man, so now let every hand be against him.'"

Upon which a blacksmith in attendance was called upon to inflict the sentence, which he did by stamping a small heated horse-shoe on

his forehead, whilst he was held forcibly down by two soldiers. He uttered a cry, though but of short continuance; for he forgot the pain he endured, when he saw his fetters knocked off his limbs, and could even indulge in a satanic smile of secret exultation, as he turned his ominous-looking eyes upon the surrounding spectators. Osmond now came up to him, and said:—

"Now you are free. Go and expiate your crimes. Go; henceforth be a wanderer and a fugitive."

The satanic man, throwing his face over his shoulder as he turned his back to depart, whilst an ominous scowl overcast his features, straightway, like a wounded wolf, gradually, slowly, accursed as he was, slunk out of view, and disappeared in the depths of an adjacent dell.

When the assembled multitude saw this result, a sort of suppressed groan of disappointment was heard, followed by a shout of execration at the departing villain. Every one was astonished at the mercy which had been

shown; but as soon as the terms of his reprieve from death were known, all who bore a spite to him, swore that he should not long live to enjoy his liberty, and that rather than he should exist in the country of which he had so long been the terror, they would hunt him down as they would a wild beast. In the mean while every one returned home, filled with the marvel of the scene which he had witnessed.

Among the most astonished and dissatisfied at the result of the proceedings was Mustafa. When he saw Cara Bey depart with his limbs whole and unfettered, to all intents and purposes as sound in body as when at first he had been made prisoner, his heart sank with dismay, and anger rose uncontrolled in his breast. He now fairly set his master down as one of those stricken madmen, of whose recovery there is no hope. That the villain, —the wretch who would have poisoned them— who had imprisoned them under false pretences—whose death would have been a public benefaction,—that such a being should have

been allowed to escape, was in his eyes a crime not to be pardoned. He would have left Osmond's service immediately, had he been able to do so; it was only the prospect of soon getting to Constantinople, which he knew was their future destination, that prevented him from putting his wishes into effect. In vain did Stasso, who blindly approved of every action of his master, endeavour to persuade him that there must exist some good reason for his conduct unknown to them; nothing could convince him of the propriety of suffering a wretch to exist who would not fail to cut each and all of their throats upon the first opportunity. As Osmond, however, now seriously talked of his approaching departure, these feelings were gradually absorbed in the preparations for their journey.

News having reached the camp that a large Turkish vessel was embarking a cargo for Constantinople at Poti, on the Black Sea, Osmond immediately determined to take his passage in her; and communicated his intentions to the commander-in-chief, who could not but approve

of them, although he would willingly have kept him as his guest for some time longer. A messenger was immediately despatched to the port, to secure all the accommodation which the vessel afforded, and to delay her departure until he should arrive. All sorts of provisions were supplied to Osmond by the kindness and generosity of his Russian friend; every facility was given for the conveyance of the women; and as the season was favourable, there was every chance before him of a good passage, and a happy deliverance from the barbarism of the rude people among whom he had so long sojourned.

Before, however, we launch him upon a new sea of troubles, we must say a word of the destinies of the faithful Hassan, who had been no unconcerned spectator of the result of his former master's seizure and enlargement. During his stay among the Russians, Osmond had taken care that he should be treated with proper attention, and now that they were about to part, he asked him in what manner he could best testify his gratitude to him for

all the services which he had rendered. Our hero having well replenished his purse through the means of an Armenian merchant, who attended the army, and who had freely given him money in virtue of his letters of credit, thought that one of the modes by which he could best show his gratitude to Hassan was, to make him a large present in money. But, strange to say, although he was really a lover of money, (and what Asiatic is not?) still it was not of money acquired in this way that he was fond; but money attained after a mode of his own—in short, he was a Kûrd and a free-booter. He, therefore, rejected Osmond's offer with all humility, and only asked one favour, which was, that he might receive an order from the Russian commander-in-chief to be allowed free access to Cara Bey's castle, and that he might be allowed to carry away with him whatever he chose. Osmond did not care to investigate too closely what that might be, for he naturally concluded that, to those who knew where to seek, much money must be there secreted, and, for aught he knew, Hassan

might be as well entitled to it as any one else. He therefore procured for him, not only the desired order, but the strongest recommendations in his favour, which would secure him protection and security from the present possessors of the castle. He entreated Hassan to let him know, through Mustafa, where he might be found, in case it should be in his power to serve him more essentially; and, with mutual protestations of friendship, Osmond saw him depart, full of hope that his future existence would be crossed by fewer vicissitudes of life than usually fall to the share of an Asiatic in his circumstances.

CHAPTER II.

J'ai ouï-dire à des vieux capitaines Turcs, qui'l y a 1500 bâtimens sur la Mer Noire, et que tous les ans il s'en perd cent.—*Voyage de* CHARDIN, v. i. p. 100.

IN order to reach Poti, and the shores of the Black Sea, it was necessary to take the circuitous route by Teflis, whence there was a road practicable for horses only. As far as Teflis, carriages might be used, though with difficulty; and as the warm-hearted commander-in-chief was anxious to see Lord Osmond depart with every honour and attention which it was in his power to show him, he insisted upon his friend making use of his carriages as far as they could be of any service to him. Osmond, with every expression of gratitude, declined any conveyance but that of horseback

for himself, but willingly accepted of a carriage for the use of Ayesha and her mother, who would be happy to be saved any part of the fatigue of the long journey before them.

The day being fixed for departure, Osmond, with the greatest regret, left the camp, where he had met with so much hospitality, accompanied by the General and his suite. Their parting was that of attached friends; he left a reputation behind him in every way honourable to himself and his nation, whilst he carried away with him an impression of the excellence and urbanity of those with whom he had had the good fortune to become thus acquainted. Ivanovitch had obtained permission to accompany his friend to the place of embarkation, and was placed in command of the small detachment of troops, without which it was dangerous to travel in this wild region, and which was to escort him as far as the Black Sea. Thus accompanied, he began his march. Of the party the persons who were most delighted, were Ayesha and Zabetta. They had never even seen a carriage

before their arrival at the camp, much less been driven in one, and the pleasure which they enjoyed in their new conveyance is not to be described—it was that of children. This foretaste of civilization was the more relished by Ayesha, because it confirmed to her much of what Osmond had related of the superiorities of European over Asiatic life. As for Zabetta, she almost forgot the schemes of ambition with which Cara Bey had so lately buoyed her up, in the dignities which she imagined had been conferred upon her by being thus elevated to so enviable a position. No Pasha's wife that she had ever heard of, was ever so honoured—she doubted whether any of the royal sultanas themselves could command such a carriage. She began to regret that she was obliged to abandon the Russians, their equipages, and their handsome officers, for the uncertain prospects held out to her by her perfidious partner in stratagem. During the whole of the road to Teflis, she did not cease to dwell upon her present happiness; and when she reached that city, which was now gra-

dually losing the character of an eastern town, owing to the European arts and civilization which its present rulers were daily introducing into it, she showed still more that her taste for Franks predominated over that for the long-robed, rough-bearded Mahomedans.

They tarried but a short while at Teflis, giving themselves time only to lay in the comforts and provisions which are essential on board a Turkish vessel, and then resumed their journey. The women, leaving their carriage with regret, were mounted on horses. For several days they travelled over a mountainous and thickly-wooded country, difficult of access, and inhabited by a thinly-scattered population, whose wild and lawless habits were with difficulty kept in check by all the rigour of Russian military rule. At length, after many a dangerous descent and many a wearisome ascent, from a commanding height they caught the first view of the sea. The Black Sea, or, as the Turks call it, the *Kara Dengiz*, lay before them — that sea, so famous among Asiatics for its terrors and its storms, and which none of

the present party (excepting those who really knew what a ship properly managed might encounter) could behold without involuntary tremor.

"*Akh!*" exclaimed Mustafa, as he wrapped himself close with his fur pelisse; "there is the sea! Where are the post-horses and the post-houses, and where this odious water? Perdition take its father and mother!"

"There it is at last," exclaimed Stasso; "may the evil one take it!"

Ayesha viewed it with unmixed delight. Its vastness infused a new light into her mind; and when she was told of its terrors, she only cast a look towards her lover, and thought to herself — 'Be he but near me, and I can fear nothing.'

To Zabetta's mind it brought nothing but bitter recollections, and she sighed in silence as she cast her eyes over it; but to Osmond it gave the greatest pleasure. From its shores he reflected that he might make his way at once to those of his own land. By a natural transition, his mind all at once was led to think

upon the dear parents and friends from whom he had so long been absent, and who, perhaps, ere this, had given him up for lost. His whole frame thrilled with joy when he thought that he was now in a fair way of returning to them. The navigation of the Black Sea once overcome, in the course of a short time he would be again in England. Those only who have been long absent from it, among barbarians and Mahomedans, can truly conceive the delicious feeling of happiness which the prospect of a return to it creates !

The small Russian fort of Poti is situated at the mouth of the ancient Phasis, called Rione by the people of the country, a river which, taking its source in the mountains of the Caucasus, is navigable nearly up to Cotatis, in Immeretia. A small village is situated near the fort, consisting of a few wretched houses, and inhabited by poor and destitute inhabitants. It was well, therefore, that our travellers were provided with comforts at Teflis; here they found none. Osmond established his quarters within the fort, whilst the

best house in the village was taken for the accommodation of the women. His first object on his arrival was to inspect the vessel which was to convey him and his suite to Constantinople; she lay at the mouth of the river, with two anchors thrown out ahead, and two astern. Osmond, on first hearing of her, had conceived that she might be one of those extraordinary, ancient, classical-looking barks, seen in such numbers on the Bosphorus, with a high circular prow and a high circular stern richly decorated with tassels and fringes, carrying one low mast on the prow, and an immeasurable boom appended to it: which altogether, he recollected, looked perilous machines wherewith to encounter the capricious and boisterous Euxine. Luckily, however, the bark in question, which was called a saique, was square-rigged, and had two masts and a bowsprit. She could hoist two sails upon each, and one on the bowsprit; occasionally she could also display a trinquetto over the mainsail, but the usual practice is only to hoist one sail on either mast. The masts were secured by backstays,

but were without shrouds, the only method of ascending being by a small ladder up the sides. There were two cabins astern, one of which was occupied by Osmond, the other by Ayesha, her mother, and Mariam. Of the cabins constructed on the forecastle, one was made over to Stasso and Mustafa, and the remainder were taken up by passengers. On the poop, close to the mizen, was erected a small wooden kiosk, duly carpeted and cushioned, which was the peculiar property of the Reis, or captain. What we call a quarter-gallery, was a sort of circular cage, which hooked on at pleasure on any exterior part of the ship. Altogether she was as rude a specimen of a vessel as could be seen in modern times, and the only wonder was how she ever got where she now floated.

The first day passed away in making preparations for departure. The cabins were swept out, and spread with carpets. All the materials for cooking were taken on board; for in a Turkish vessel every one carries his own. Many passengers had already established them-

selves on the deck, and, from all appearances, their numbers would be great, besides an abundant cargo. Osmond was anxious not to be detained, but he had to do with men to whom the meaning of the words 'being in a hurry' was unknown; and during the whole course of his journey he perhaps had never been so much called upon for the exercise of his patience as he was here. The only answer which he could ever obtain from the captain was, "*Yavash, yavash* — slowly, slow," or "*Bakalum* — we shall see!" or "*Inshallah*—if it pleases God!" He was an old weather-beaten personage, with red cheeks and a white beard, whose legs had grown quite arched from being constantly seated tailor-like on the deck, and whose eye had sunk deep into his head from gazing at the weather. Though Osmond insisted that the wind was now as fair as it could blow, all the answer he got was, "Let us see how it will be to-morrow." With such a person all that could be done was to adopt the Persian's philosophy — to spread the carpet of hope, and to smoke the pipe of expectation.

We have already said that Zabetta and Ayesha inhabited a house in the village. It was situated almost immediately upon the banks of the Phasis. The windows of the room which they occupied, looked upon the broad stream as it flowed past in tranquil majesty. The day had closed, darkness had come on, when the rising moon lighted up in slow gradation the various objects which formed the surrounding scenery. Its principal beauties consisted of several small islets, situated in the centre of the stream, diversified by wood; on the summit of the largest were seen the remains of an old Turkish fortress, built by Sultan Mûrat, whose broken turrets and crumbling walls reared their rude outlines in the most picturesque form amidst the rank vegetation. At intervals might be heard the wild and harmonious song of the sailors on board some distant ship heaving its anchor; and this, combined with the soft and ever-returning fall of the surge on the beach, produced sounds which, perhaps, are to be heard only in the still calm nights peculiar to the Levant.

Ayesha had taken her seat at the open lattice, enjoying the beauty of the night, and, among other thoughts and speculations, doubting whether the stillness of the sea, which she saw before her quiet as a lake, brilliant as a mirror, could ever be so disturbed as to create the danger which she had been told was so frequently experienced. The image of the moon was reflected in a thousand little silvery agitated streaks down to the very margin of the river near her window. On a sudden she perceived a man issue from the darkness into the moonlight. He stood for a minute on a small wooden pier which jutted into the river, with his eyes fixed on the shipping in the roadstead; and when his figure was thus brought out in strong relief, he presented the outline of a powerful man, with broad shoulders, his head rather stooping on his breast, and inclining to corpulency. Ayesha's cheek blanched as she looked at him, for she thought she had seen his form before. And indeed she was not mistaken, for when he turned round and walked a few steps towards her, she vehemently closed

the lattice, and screamed out in terror, "Ahi, Cara Bey !"

"What say you?" exclaimed Zabetta, who was seated at the other end of the room; "are you mad, Ayesha?"

"It is he, I declare," exclaimed Ayesha, highly agitated and trembling with fear; "it can be none else."

"It is impossible; let me see," said Zabetta: when, opening the window, looking out, and seeing no one, she added, "you must be mad, there is nothing here."

"I am sure it was he," said Ayesha; "let us send to Osman Aga,"—so she called Osmond.

"Nonsense, child," said her mother, "we shall only create an alarm for nothing. Let us go to bed. To-morrow, please Allah! we set sail."

But it required some time to pacify the maiden, in whose mind the recollection of all that she had suffered at the hands of the monster, produced a return of uncontrollable fear. They sat and listened with anxiety. Every sound alarmed the daughter, and evidently disquieted the mother, until at length,

nothing more being heard, they retired to their beds. Ayesha soon after fell into a profound sleep, but Zabetta remained on the watch: she apprehended, in fact, that it might be Cara Bey. How he was ever to reach Constantinople at the same time with herself, had been to her a difficulty which she could not solve; but now her eyes were opened. She watched for a long time—midnight had struck —an hour or two still passed on,—all was silent,—she was about yielding to overpowering sleep, when she heard a slight tap at her window. She listened with all her senses awake, as she sat upright in her bed;—she then distinguished a second and louder tap. With beating heart, she softly rose, and on tiptoe stole to the window and opened the lattice. There indeed she saw Cara Bey in person standing close below it. The moon shone bright upon her, and he recognised her." "Zabetta," said he in a low voice, "give ear. When you reach Constantinople, mind you assert that you are a Turkish woman, and your daughter a Turkish girl; much depends on that. You have

been to a Christian church, I know that: be no longer a fool, but recollect my words: now go." Upon this, putting up his hand to his mouth in token of silence, he disappeared.

Zabetta returned to bed, but not to sleep. She pondered all the night through upon what she had seen and heard, and, when the day broke, she was still absorbed in thought. Ayesha arose refreshed, and having heard no more of the apparition which had alarmed her, allowed it no longer to disturb her thoughts.

With the morning came the bustle of departure. A messenger had been sent to them with injunctions to be ready for immediate embarkation. The wind was fair, the anchor was heaving. Boats were seen plying to and fro. Most of the vessels in port were about setting sail. Every one appeared to be visited with unusual fits of activity, and the whole scene was full of animation. A boat was despatched to take the women, and returned for Osmond and his attendants. Ivanovitch stood on the beach to see his friend embark. They took a tender farewell of each other, and sincerely

hoped that by some lucky accident, (an event not at all unlikely,) they might be again thrown together. As Osmond stepped on the deck of the saique, the anchor was tripped, the sails were given to the wind, and the bark glided smoothly on into the bosom of the deep.

Osmond, although dressed as a Turk, and looking in every respect like one, was known to be a Frank; for, having embarked with all the honours and attentions that could be shown by the small garrison of Russians at Poti, he could not have concealed his being an European even if he had wished it. The women passed off as Christians, and were known to be under his protection. The other passengers consisted of a Turkish trader in slaves, who was carrying an assortment of six women and two men, whom he had gathered along the coast, (consisting of one Circassian, two Mingrelians, three Abkasians, and two Immeretians, all known under the general name of Circassians;) of several Jews, and of a large company of Armenians. There were also many Turkish merchants, and one who had his harem

on board, returning from Caffa. The principal cargo of the vessel was salt, taken in at Douzla, or the salt-works, about fifty miles south-east from Caffa; the remainder consisted of wax, honey, and different sorts of skins, particularly those of the jackal, which are some of the few articles that the inhabitants of Mingrelia, and the other parts of Circassia, have to barter against the merchandize brought from Constantinople. The decks of the saique were greatly encumbered, not only with the numerous company, but with all their different articles of necessity—their beds, kitchen-utensils, and provisions, comprising both live and dead stock. She was worked by thirty sailors, and, all together, there might be about one hundred souls on board.

Osmond having made every arrangement for securing such comforts to Ayesha and her mother as the rude nature of the accommodations on board would admit, and having formed a tolerable estimate of the utter incapability of their vessel to resist a gale of wind in case it should be their misfortune to be overtaken

by one, was anxious to ascertain the extent of their captain's acquirements in the science of navigation. He saw a compass, it is true, but nothing else—no charts, no hour-glass, no log-line. He stepped up to the old Reis just after he had finished his evening prayer in his little kiosk, and the following conversation ensued.

"*Oghour allah!*—a good passage to you, Omar Reis," (for that was the captain's name,) said Osmond, accosting him with the frank familiarity of manner which is most likely to win a sailor's heart.

"May Allah give us success, friend!" answered the old man: "please Heaven, we shall get on well."

"Inshallah!" answered Osmond.

"Inshallah!" repeated the Reis.

"Are we likely to have a good passage?" inquired Osmond.

"What can I say?" answered the other. "*Kismet!*—fate! we are in God's hands! The wind is fair; please God it will last."

"Whither are you steering now?" inquired

Osmond, finding that they were nearly out of sight of land.

"To Sinope, Inshallah!" said the old man extending his hand right a-head.

"By what point are you steering?'

"By what point!" inquired Omar; "what do I know? by the way I have always gone. Don't I know that there lies Trebisond?" pointing with his left hand on the larboard beam; "and don't I know that Caffa is there?" pointing with his right hand. "Besides, have I not got my compass?"

"Ah, the compass! do you ever steer by compass?" said Osmond.

"*Evallah!*—to be sure!" said the old man in great exultation, expecting to surprise the Frank by his knowledge; then, calling for the compass, which was kept in a square box, he placed it before them, and pointed to the fleur-de-lis on the index, "There, that is north; here is south: on this side is east, and on that, west. This is the direction of the blessed Mecca. We—praise be to the Prophet!—we know many things!"

"But have you no chart?"

"We have no chart," said the old man.

"Then what is the use of a compass?" replied Osmond.

"Of what use is it!" said Omar. "I have always done very well without a chart: my father did very well before me; and my grandfather before him. After that, what can you want more? Give me only wind—I want nothing more; after all, that is the father and mother of sailors; charts are *bosh*—nothing!"

"But were you to meet with a *fortuna*—a tempest, what would you do then? You ought to know where you are."

"Inshallah!" said the Reis with a sigh, "we shall have no fortuna! *Allah buyûk der!*—God is great!"

"Are the gales violent in this sea?" asked Osmond.

"What can I say?" said Omar, evidently wishing to waive the subject, pulling his jacket over his breast, and looking miserable at the very thought. "Inshallah! we shall have no

gale! *Allah kerîm der!*—God is merciful!" he repeated several times with great seriousness, at the same time shaking his head and throwing up his eyes to heaven. "Inshallah! *fortuna yok!*—we shall have no tempest!"

"Inshallah!" repeated Osmond, and walked away fully satisfied that *Inshallah, Allah kerîm*, and the fleur-de-lis on the compass, was about the only science to which they had to trust in case they should meet with bad weather. However, it served perfectly, as good luck would have it, to conduct them to Sinope, where the saique was to touch in order to take in an additional stock of passengers and more merchandize.

All the passengers, the merchant and his slaves excepted, immediately landed to obtain a transient relief from the miseries of shipboard. Among the rest, Osmond also landed, to visit the birth-place of Diogenes, but left Ayesha and her mother on board, giving directions that they should show themselves as little as possible, in order not to attract attention. The wind continuing fair, Omar Reis, with

more alacrity than he had hitherto exhibited, hastened again to set sail; but what was the dismay of every one on board to find that they were to embark at least fifty additional passengers, the principal part of whom consisted of a *bairak*, or flag of janissaries, with their commander. This party entirely overspread the deck, and scarcely left any room for working the vessel. The Reis wished very much to dislodge Osmond from his berth, in order to dispose of it to some great personage who was expected; but to this our hero would by no means agree. The Turk, conceiving that he might lord it over the giaours at his pleasure, would have taken forcible possession of Osmond's cabin, had not its owner, with Stasso and Mustafa at his side, stoutly opposed the innovation, and exhibited such fierce determination to resist, that the great man's quarters were prepared with reluctance in some less eligible place.

The vessel was already under weigh, when the expected personage was lifted on board. By the large turban on his head, he was apparently

a man of the law, but so enveloped in shawls and pelisses, evidently made up to discharge all the duties of sea-sickness, that his face could not be seen. When deposited on his carpet, which had been spread in a snug corner on the deck, having his little court of attendants about him, he listlessly called for the eternal chibouque, and then uncovering his face, to the great discomposure of Osmond, exhibited the severe and repulsive countenance of the Mufti of Kars.

This encounter was in every way disagreeable, and foreboded no good to Osmond, particularly as they were likely again to be brought into contact in disputing the possession of the cabin. Putting, however, the best face he could upon this feature of his adventures, and feeling himself the more secure from molestation the nearer he approached Constantinople, Osmond conducted himself as if he were unconscious of the presence of his former enemy. The Mufti, who had a keen and observant eye, was not slow in recognising him; but, as he was not possessed of much nerve when in power, he

found himself much less vigorous now that he was out of it; and recollecting the personal prowess which Osmond had exhibited at Kars, he for the present said nothing, keeping to himself the discovery which he had made. This worthy was now on his way from Kars to the capital on business connected with his office, and, as it was said, to give an account of the state of the frontier on the Persian and Russian side of the empire, which was deemed necessary after the recent events by which it had been disturbed. Whatever his energies might be, they were soon extinguished when the vessel was fairly at sea; for, having given himself up to fate and squeamishness, he rolled himself up in his pelisses, and endeavoured to forget his miseries by remaining in a state of total inaction.

The first day after their departure from Sinope proved fine. The Reis kept his vessel as close to the shore as possible, and cared for little else to direct his course, the headlands standing him in lieu of all the science of navigation. In proportion as they approached

the mouth of the Bosphorus, increased the spirits of those who were well enough to enjoy themselves.

Osmond now in good earnest began to hope that he might soon be restored to civilized life. He did not cease to form schemes in his mind for making Ayesha his own; and although he indulged himself but little in conversing with her during the passage, still he did not pass an hour without reflecting upon her conduct ever since he had first known her. It had been in every way so superior to anything which could have been expected from one brought up as she had been, that, in addition to the ardent love with which her beauty had inspired him, he felt for her the highest respect and esteem. Again and again did he revert to the trinkets, the coin, and the handkerchief, as corroborative of her mother's mysterious conduct; and again did he determine, the moment he should reach Constantinople, to set every investigation on foot to discover what might be her real origin.

CHAPTER III.

Boatswain.—Here, master : what cheer ?

Master.—Good : speak to the mariners : fall to't yarely, or we run ourselves a-ground : bestir, bestir !—*Tempest.*

THE second day after the departure of the saique from Sinope, the wind began to die away, and towards the evening it had fallen entirely, and a dead calm ensued. The vessel did not answer her helm, and rolled about most fearfully, very much to the discomfort of all on board. Who that has ever seen a company of sick Asiatics, but must confess the sight to be infinitely more deplorable than a similar exhibition of sick Europeans ! Their beards, and flowing robes, their large head-dresses, and their listless habits, however picturesque they may be, are but ill-calculated for meeting the thousand ills attendant upon

a sea life. The Mufti presented a picture of genuine misery ; often did he sigh for the soft cushions and the comforts of his house, when, at every dip which the vessel made, he perceived the waves curling up towards him, as if they would swallow him up, turban and all. The janissaries, armed to the teeth, so full of swagger and audacity on shore, were here reduced, to make use of a sailor's simile, to the consistency of so many wet swabs. The poor Circassian slaves sighed when they thought upon the wild mountains which they had left ; and we willingly draw a veil over the miseries endured by the gentle Ayesha and her intriguing mother. Mustafa was only kept from annihilation by the visions which occasionally floated in his mind, of the luxuries awaiting him at the gate of the ambassadorial residence at Constantinople, varied by reflections on post-horses and post-houses ; whilst Stasso, who proved one of the stoutest and was the least incommoded of the party, only thought how he might be of the best use to his master.

Osmond had observed with much anxiety symptoms of a change of wind: the weather was sultry; he remarked a bank of clouds gathering to the south-west, the precise direction of their course; the sun, as it descended below the horizon, appeared heavy and ominous, and there was altogether a general sensation of approaching storm. He looked about for the Reis, to discover by his looks, (the best barometer to consult, for there was no other on board,) what might be his feelings on the occasion, and he perceived him quietly counting his beads after his evening prayer, perched up in his little cage, as if all was going on well.

"What do you think of the weather?" said Osmond, stepping up to him.

"*Guzelik* — good, pretty good," answered the old man.

"Our wind is gone," remarked Osmond.

"What can we do?" said the Reis, with resignation: "It will come again."

"Don't you think it will come a-head?" enquired Osmond: "It looks dark yonder."

"Let it come," answered the other, "we can always run back to Sinope."

"But see, it is come! Why don't you brace up your yards?"

"*Bakalum!* — we shall see!" said the other, totally unconcerned. "*Allah kerîm der!* — God is merciful!"

By this time the vessel had drifted towards the shore, having felt the influence of the current which runs in the direction of the Bosphorus. Darkness increased to the south-west; a black cloud, portending an immediate squall, was occasionally lighted up by slight indications of lightning, and very distant thunder was heard: still, old Omar sat cross-legged on his carpet, with two or three of his friends, smoking his pipe, waiting for his evening meal, and ejaculating ever and anon, "Praises be to the Prophet! All will be well, please Allah!"

Osmond could scarcely control the risings of his temper; he saw the coming squall — he thought he could perceive the agitation of the sea under the margin of the cloud;

and when the approaching crisis could no longer be doubted, he made his way hastily to the captain, who, with his hand in the dish, was quietly ruminating a previous mouthful of rice, and implored him to lower his sails immediately, or else he would soon have none left.

"*Yavash, yavash!* — slowly, slow!" mumbled out the old man, with apparent unconcern: — "*Bir chey yok* — there is nothing; *korkma* — fear not."

He had no sooner said this, than the whole violence of the squall took the vessel on her beam, the sea whitening with foam and throwing her very considerably on her side. This circumstance, accompanied as it was by a most vivid flash of lightning and an awful clap of thunder, soon produced a total change in the apathy of the Reis and his sailors, and a visible sensation among the passengers. Omar, jumping up from his carpet, left his pillau to the mercy of the winds, and ordered his sails to be lowered. This was not so easily done, for, the wind having taken them, they were now flapping about, making a tre-

mendous noise, and flying out in every direction without control.

As night came on, the violence of the storm increased, and the cries and shouts of the sailors increased with it ; as usual on such occasions, all were commanders, and none obeyed.— Wrong ropes were hauled, order and counter-order instantly succeeded each other — no one listened — the poor old captain in vain attempted to make himself heard ; crew, passengers, janissaries, mufti, all were vociferating at once. Every man had got on deck, the women alone were kept to their cabins — thunder and lightning succeeded each other in awful grandeur. Osmond had taken his stand close to the aperture of the cabin of his Ayesha, who, protruding her hand, had quietly placed it in his, thus instituting a channel of communication between their hearts, he encouraging her occasionally by a word of consolation, she showing her fortitude and confidence in him by her silence. A knot of men, sailors as well as passengers, were collected on the forecastle, with upturned

faces, watching the aspect of the sky; when all at once a most vivid flash darted down from the cloud, and enveloped them for an instant in one immense blaze of apparently liquid fire; every object on deck was brought to light with as much precision as in the broadest day. Osmond was all at once struck as if the electric shock had overtaken him, by seeing in the crowd the face of a man whose features were so indelibly fixed on his mind that he could never mistake them; to call it the face of a demon, would immediately discover to whom it belonged — it was, in fact, the face of Cara Bey himself. Osmond involuntarily dropped his mistress's hand the moment this vision appeared, so strong was the effect which it produced upon him. Ayesha then for the first time ventured to open her lips, and, alarmed by his sudden action, said, "Osman! tell me, in the name of Allah! what has happened?"—"Nothing, nothing," answered her lover quickly, still looking intently through the almost impenetrable darkness which had succeeded, in the hope of being able to make out the person of

the monster. He could see nothing more for some time, but kept his eyes fixed in the direction where he had first beheld him, until, Stasso coming up, he inquired with an anxious voice whether he had remarked Cara Bey among the passengers.

"Cara Bey!" exclaimed the ardent Greek in a tone of great astonishment, "*Ti diavolo!* what makes you think of him, O Effendi!"

"I have seen him," said his master, "of that I am quite sure; go a-head, look among the people on the forecastle, and tell me whether he be not one of them; go with caution, and say nothing."

Stasso did as he was directed, and in a short time discovered Cara Bey seated behind one of the small guns which the saique carried in her bows, crouched low on the deck as if afraid of being seen, with his tasseled turban well drawn over his eyes.—"The dog is there, sure enough," said Stasso; "what shall we do with him, Effendi?"

"What can we do but bear his presence as well as we can?" said Osmond, evidently

much discomposed by the discovery. "Say nothing to him — leave him to himself — we can have no more to do with him — the world's surface is free to him as well as ourselves?"

"But," said Stasso, who was not at all willing to let the wretch escape so easily — "but, Effendi, cannot we throw him overboard? what is to hinder us?"

"Softly, Stasso," said Osmond, "in God's name, be cautious; we are, here, Franks among Mahomedans,—giaours, as they call us, among true believers. If you talk of throwing people overboard, see that it be not our turn first. Go—be quiet—say nothing;—we shall soon be at the end of our voyage, and then all will be forgotten."

By this time the weather had developed itself in a complete storm; it had set in with a squall, and was increasing to a gale. The old Reis did his best to manage his bark, but with her high stern and her scanty sails she was so difficult to navigate, that she lay at the mercy of the waves during the whole night. He would have run back to

Sinope, but he required daylight to tell him where he was; for the land could not be seen; the stars were obscured by the darkness of the night, and he had no powers of mind left to puzzle out what to him were the intricacies of the compass. Osmond would willingly have helped him, but he would accept of no assistance, delighted to have hit upon a good reason for procrastination, by saying, "Let us wait till the morning."

When the morning began to dawn, the gale still blew violently, and all hands on board were anxiously waiting to know what steps were to be taken, when a circumstance occurred which for a while took off their attention from the uncertainty of their situation.

Stasso, after the discovery which he had made, having quitted his master, sat down by his companion Mustafa, to whom, of course, he communicated the unpleasant intelligence. He would willingly have kept it to himself, according to his master's directions, but could not, so violently was he agitated, and so impelled by passion to assault the wretch. Mustafa, as may be supposed, caught the whole

of Stasso's violence, although it was much tempered by fear; he would willingly have lent his hand to throw Cara Bey overboard, but felt that there were consequences attendant upon such an enterprise which might not suit his own safety. They did not cease talking over this circumstance, and connecting it with another—that of meeting with their old enemy of Kars, the Mufti: they agreed that they must surely have sailed under the aspect of some evil star, or at some unlucky hour, or before the appointed time for sailing—that is, before the festival of St. Georgio, among the Greeks—to have been thus persecuted by ill-fortune. As the day began to dawn, observing the gale to be unabated in violence, Mustafa, who cherished all Asiatic superstitions, was at once struck with the conviction that this change of wind and this sudden turn of luck must proceed from the presence of some ill-fated man on board—some Jonas, who, in person, ruled the fortunes of the whole bark. "Who," thought he, "can this be, but that Yezidi, that son of the evil one, that demon of wickedness, Cara Bey?"

He soon communicated this thought to the officer commanding the janissaries, with whom he had struck up a friendship, who, when he heard that there was a Yezidi on board, immediately concluded with Mustafa that all the mischief had been caused by his presence; and seeing the gale still hopelessly violent, they, in their united wisdom, thought that the only way of securing a return of fine weather was to throw the devoted man overboard. This feeling having gained the minds of the janissaries and the other Turks, the question "*Haniah Yezidi?* — where is the devil-worshipper?" was soon heard to issue from different mouths.

"There is nothing of that sort on board!" exclaimed Omar Reis, alarmed at the cry; "we are all good men! Heaven forbid it!"

"But there is indeed!" said Mustafa.

"Yes," said Stasso; and, seeing the top of his turban protruding from behind the gun, exclaimed, "and there he sits."

The unfortunate Cara Bey having been thus pointed out, the attention of every one was soon drawn upon him.

"I do not know this man," said the captain; "how got he here?"

"He is a Kurd," said one. "He is a Yezidi," said another. "Look at his hair."

"*Lahnet be shaitan!*" exclaimed Stasso in malicious exultation; upon which the excited Cara Bey arose, and his eyes glared most horribly.

"Look at the horse-shoe on his forehead!" cried out Mustafa, concealing his own person at the same time. Upon which there was a rush among the most superstitious of the Turks to seize him, with the intention of throwing him overboard. Cara Bey, seeing his danger, repelled them as they approached him.

"He brings us ill-luck," says one; "Throw him over," said another; "Kill the Yezidi!" roared out a third. The tumult had now assumed a serious aspect. Every one on deck rose to see what was the matter. Osmond, hearing the voices of Stasso and Mustafa, immediately stepped forward, and perceiving what was about to take place, made his way with violence among the crowd. Three or four men had now

seized the devoted wretch, and were about to plunge him head foremost into the sea, when Osmond, who could not thus quietly stand by and see a fellow-creature murdered, rushed in, and with all his might so thrust himself between the murderers and their victim, that, by dint of blows and violence, he succeeded in saving him from his watery grave. Standing over him, he drew his yatagan, which he usually wore, and vowed that he would kill the first man who should venture to molest him. This strange interposition of a Frank in favour of a devil-worshipper astounded every one. Some thought their religion was the same; others, that they were in league with one another. The violence of the tumult was about to fall upon them both, when Stasso, although enraged at his master's interference in favour of Cara Bey, immediately stepped forward to his rescue, followed by the Reis, and afterwards by Mustafa: thus united, and making a show of resistance, they prevented any further attack. Osmond addressed the crowd, and by his conciliatory words and manner suc-

ceeded in pacifying them ; having in a great measure persuaded them that the heavens would continue to be unpropitious, rather than turn in their favour, should they call down the vengeance of God upon their heads by committing the crime of murder !

The wind had continued very variable during the night, coming first from one point, then from another, and producing a most disagreeably agitated sea. As the day broke, just when the old Reis had managed to get his bark with the direction of her head for Sinope, it began to blow dead upon the shore, which was now so near that the surf could plainly be distinguished breaking over a reef of rocks, the black crests of which showed themselves fearfully above the water. Turks have no idea of beating to windward ; they either sail with the wind right aft, or not at all. The saique was not calculated for going close to the wind ; had she attempted it, she would have made but little way on account of her cumbrous construction ; and now that it became necessary to work off a lee-shore, it was evident that,

if the wind did not change, there was every likelihood of her being thrown on the rocks.

Osmond saw their danger; and immediately endeavoured to persuade old Omar to brace-up his yards, and to haul his vessel as close to the wind as possible. But his efforts were to no purpose; the Reis was quite bewildered: he and his mate saw their situation, and, as long as the land was still at a moderate distance, lived in hope of a change of wind; and what with "Allah kerîm!" and "Allah buyûk der!" they managed to calm their minds, and even to smoke their pipes. But as the vessel approached the shore, and the rocks and their foaming crests were so plainly discerned that there could be no illusion about their dangerous vicinity, the dreadful nature of their situation seemed to break upon their minds all at once, and, abandoning the tiller, and leaving the bark to drift as the waves might direct, they began to deplore their fate in accents not to be misunderstood. The doleful prospect was soon made known to every one, and death and all its horrors

stared them in the face. If once the vessel ran upon the rocks towards which she was drifting, there was no hope for them,—every soul on board must perish. The Mufti, forgetting his sickness, unrobed himself of his pelisses, and, laying aside all his dignity, ran about the decks like one demented. The cries of the women were heard. Ayesha and Zabetta, stepping from their cabin upon hearing the distress on deck, all at once became aware of their danger. Ayesha said not a word, but, keeping herself entirely veiled, quietly took her stand near Osmond, who was revolving in his mind what could be done to save their lives. All he could say to his mistress was, "My Ayesha, if death is to be our fate, let us die together. Stay by me, and we will pray to God for help!" Ayesha knelt down close to his feet in humble acquiescence with his proposal. Zabetta, on the contrary, began to bemoan herself in a manner truly pitiable. Many were the instances in which the resignation of the true believer might have been remarked; but many, also, in which the weak-

ness of human nature got the better of every principle, and betrayed itself by the most uncontrollable fear.

There was among the crew a Greek, a palicari, of fine form and of great activity; Osmond had before remarked him, and now called him and Stasso to his side. Having endeavoured, in the first place, to allay their fears by soothing words, he told them, if they would coolly attend to his directions, and watch every change in the wind, much might be done towards saving the lives of the crew. He took charge himself of the tiller: he then got the yards sharply braced up, hoisted the trinquetto over the mainsail, and got out another sail on the bowsprit; and, keeping her as close to the wind as possible, he hoped that, if they were in the least favoured by a slant, he might weather the rocks, behind which, and a protecting turn of the coast, he might run the bark into smooth water, and there anchor. The captain, the mate, the passengers, were all too much absorbed in their miseries to see what steps had been

taken by Osmond, or, if they did perceive them, to have any confidence in his endeavours. Many would have taken to the only boat which belonged to the saique, but, in the heavy sea which was then running, who was bold enough to risk himself? Notwithstanding the exertions of Osmond, everything promised speedy destruction. The vessel made but little way, and went most bodily to leeward. He, however, still kept the tiller in hand, whilst his whole attention was fixed on the sails. Stasso stood close by his side,—the Palicari was at the mainbrace. The hissing of the waters over the rocks was now plainly heard; every effort seemed hopeless; the vessel was tossed to and fro with unceasing violence. The piteous, the heart-rending cries that proceeded from the passengers, mixed up with the howling of the storm and the lashing of the sea, were enough to deprive every heart of the spirit of exertion, and unnerve every arm; but Osmond, to the last, trusted that the wind might favour them, and, if ever so little, they would be safe. To his unspeakable delight,

what he had expected came to pass. Just as the last hope had expired, when one might have almost jumped ashore upon the rocks, the wind suddenly veered two or three points, and enabled the heavy bark to lay up and weather the land.

The Reis, who was waiting with all the resignation of a true believer for the dissolution of his vessel and himself, seeing that she was gradually turning her stern to the danger, rushed up to Osmond, who was at the helm, and would have kissed his feet for joy: his exultation and his delight were quite affecting to see; he gazed upon the preserver of himself and his fortunes as one that did not belong to earth. To show his devotion, he immediately placed himself under his orders, and executed with alacrity every order which he gave. In the course of the morning, he had the unlooked-for happiness of seeing his vessel in safety and at anchor.

The friendly nook, which had thus so providentially given security to the vessel and saved their lives, was situated on the south

coast of the Black Sea, not far from Elegri, a town occupying the site of the ancient Heraclea, or Penderaki, as it is most commonly called by the Greeks, and about eighty miles from the mouth of the Bosphorus. No sooner had the captain and his crew secured the vessel by anchors both ahead and astern, than all the passengers betook themselves to the shore as fast as they could. The difference between Osmond's feelings and those of the Mahomedans on being saved was striking: he acknowledged, and felt in the highest degree, that the hand of Providence had mercifully interposed between them and a premature death, and his first impulse was to vent his gratitude in prayer and thanksgiving; the feeling of the Mahomedans was a cold acquiescence in the decrees of predestination. They all felt, more or less, unbounded delight at their present safety, for it is our nature to shrink from danger and cling to life; but the same calm resignation which would make the real Mussulman bend his head to the bowstring, or see himself involved in ruin, or meet his death

by shipwreck, would also sear his heart to the love and gratitude which the Christian is prompt to feel for every dispensation proceeding from the hand of his Maker, and make him look upon his preservation as a mere occurrence which was pre-ordained and predestined.

All felt that, through Osmond's sagacity and presence of mind, their lives had been saved; but he received no intimation of their thanks beyond kind expressions. One said, "*Aferin, Frank!*—well done, Frank! You are a good man! Mashallah! the English are good!" Another, who had picked up a word or two of Italian, came up to him and patting him on the shoulder said "*Bono Inglìz!*" A third presented him with an apple, and holding up his fingers, as denoting a whole handful, exclaimed, "*Mashallah!*—praises to Allah! Jack G—d d—m—*bono!*" This ebullition was followed by that of another Turk, who, coming up to Osmond, looked at him for some time straight in the face, and said, as he shook his head in token of astonishment, "*Ai gidi*

Ingliz — sen chok adam! — Ah, you English-man! — you are much of a man!" The chief of the janissaries invited Osmond to sit by him, and offered him his own pipe to smoke, first cleaning its orifice with his thumb: his observations upon the late event took an epigrammatic turn, for, pointing to the poor Omar, whose prowess had certainly been far from conspicuous, he said, "*Osmanli domous — Ingliz yaous!* — the Turks are hogs — the English clever dogs!" The Mufti did not deign to make the least acknowledgment, but, when the danger was over, wrapt himself up, as usual, in his pelisse, made up his face and mind to be wretched, and retreated to his corner.

As for Cara Bey, his mind had been so entirely lacerated by his downfall, that any benefit now conferred upon him, was like the heaping of hot burning coals upon his head. Instead of feeling the least gratitude to Osmond for having been the preserver of his life from the brutality of those who would have thrown him into the sea, or from the horrors of shipwreck, he seemed to have acquired a

fresh accession of hate against him, and an increasing thirst for revenge. During the storm he remained unmoved, entirely wrapt up in the folds of his own diabolical nature. As soon as the vessel was at anchor, he was the first to set foot on shore, and, after having been heard to mutter certain mysterious threats of vengeance, he disappeared, and never more returned on board.

Mustafa, who was always destined either to dread his master as a madman or to worship him as an angel, was now absorbed in the latter exercise. His gratitude, when it was really called forth, was sincere. He never, indeed, could discover why, when there had been so fair an opportunity to get rid of Cara Bey, his master should have stepped forward to save the wretch — he thought the mad fit must then have seized him; but when he recollected that, but for his endeavours, his own carcass would have been food for fishes, he did not cease eyeing him with looks of astonishment and admiration, saying to himself, "*Wallah billah!* — by Heavens, that *is* a good man!"

Both he and Stasso, when they found that Cara Bey had taken his leave and decamped, were sensible that they had much to dread from his revenge; and although they could not foresee how that revenge might be accomplished, destitute and a vagabond as he now appeared to be, yet they felt that they were exposed to meet him face to face, at any time, in a country where his delinquencies were unknown, and where he might be protected.

CHAPTER IV.

Brief time had Conrad now to greet Gulnare,
Few words to re-assure the trembling fair.

The Corsair.

THE weather having resumed its wonted serenity, and the wind being again fair, Osmond persuaded Omar Reis, who was now grown more docile with respect to his representations, to put to sea. In the course of a short sail, they reached the entrance of the Bosphorus, and, very soon after, the saique anchored in the little quiet bay of Buyukderé, previously to dropping down to Constantinople. The transition from the troubled waters, the uncertainties, and particularly from the recent storms of the Black Sea, to the calm and se-

curity of the narrow channel of the Bosphorus, more like a magnificent river than an arm of the sea, was, to use the Persian poet's imagery, "like going to bed in the executioner's prison-house with a rope round your neck, and awaking the next morning in a *gûlistan*, or rose-garden, with a cupbearer presenting to you a goblet of rosy-coloured wine." The dark open sea shaded by sombre clouds, became here a blue and transparent water, reflecting within its bosom the beautiful and refreshing scenery which decks the banks of this celebrated strait. From the anchorage at Buyukderé might be seen that picturesque village, with its row of painted and architectural-fronted villas, principally belonging to the ambassadors of foreign powers and to the rich European merchants, backed by gardens rising in terraces behind, green to the summit of the hills, and receding into one of the most delicious, quiet distributions of water in nature. This view is terminated by a prairie of the most luxuriant verdure, in the centre of which is a clump of some of the finest plane-trees,

perhaps, in the world, conspicuous throughout the landscape from their immense size, and beautiful to look at on account of the extraordinary grace with which the foliage is distributed upon their wide-spreading branches. To this spot, upon holidays, resort the whole of the population of this and the surrounding villages, great and small, Frank and Asiatic, ambassador and his dependent, Greek and Armenian, Turk and Jew—all bent upon pleasure and festivity.

On the other side of the strait, the shore rises into verdant knolls, intermixed with meadows, trees of all sizes from the poplar to the plane, exhibiting, in stealthy vistas, those low-roofed, painted, and gilded kiosks, so peculiar to the Turks; and occasionally, villages, with the tapering and picturesque minaret rising from the midst. To row along the shore in one of the lovely caiques; to lose one's self in the numerous charming little nooks with which it abounds; to examine each beauty as it rises on the sight, is a luxury known only to those who have visited these unique and delightful scenes.

During the voyage in the Black Sea, Osmond had been solicitous to keep the women concealed as much as possible from observation. He was aware that difficulties might arise, upon his arrival at Constantinople, as to their safe disposal. Still retaining the appearance of Mahomedan women, for they had not changed their mode of dress since they left Kars, it would be asked, how do women of the true faith happen to be under the protection of a giaour? They had themselves willingly adhered to their cabin, particularly since the Mufti had come on board, who, had he known that they belonged to Suleiman Aga, his townsman, might probably have insisted upon their returning to Kars. It was only during the moments of peril which we have described, that Osmond had held any communication with them, when every one was too much engrossed by his own situation to notice them. Now that they had reached their destination, Ayesha, still submissive to her lover's wishes, checked her curiosity to see the wonders of the Bosphorus; but Zabetta was not to be

so restrained; she insisted upon coming on deck, and did not cease to examine with delight and astonishment the magnificence of the scene before her. She recollected the injunctions she had received from Cara Bey to declare herself to be a Mahomedan woman; and right well did she determine to put them into effect upon the first necessary opportunity. Surveying the new world which, like magic, had sprung up before her eyes, as the seat of her future greatness; building upon the charms of her daughter as a stepping-stone to her ambition; and with a full dependence upon the ability of Cara Bey, whose interests were now so identified with her own, to help her, she spurned the poor and insignificant prospects held out by any connexion with Osmond; and waited with anxiety for the moment which would release herself and Ayesha from his fellowship, and from the authority which he had hitherto exercised over them.

The Mufti of Kars, tired with the miseries of shipboard, had landed at Buyukderé, and proceeded to Constantinople by land. Osmond

would have done the same, and immediately have sought out his friend Wortley; but he was determined not to think of himself until Ayesha was fairly settled in a suitable lodging. His intentions were to convey her with the least possible delay to the first Christian place where they might be married, and then to England. How much better had it been for him had he landed at Buyukderé, and seen his friend! Upon such slight events, very frequently, hangs the whole of our earthly happiness or misery.

The saique slowly made its way down the Bosphorus, stopping at each village on the coast, and giving its passengers every opportunity to examine the never-ceasing variety of its enchanting scenery. At length, on the second morning after leaving Buyukderé, Omar Reis brought up in the canal opposite to Orta Kieu, not far from its small though conspicuous mosque. From this point the eye might take in the whole of the splendid view, comprising the greatest part of the city, its celebrated Seraglio Point, the entrance into the

harbour, or the Golden Horn, the suburbs of Galata and Pera, on the one hand, — with the town of Scutari, its magnificent scenery backed by the mountain of Bourgourlû, on the other; whilst the opening to the Propontis, or Sea of Marmora, studded with vessels of all sizes and denominations, at once produced a most picturesque break between the conformation of the lands, and showed the termination of the Bosphorus on its northern extremity.

Osmond could not sufficiently feast his eyes with this glorious view, however impatient he might be to deposit his lovely charge in a place of safety. Neither could he resist the desire of making Ayesha a partaker of his rapture and delight; he invited her therefore to take post on the deck beside him. She was well worthy of such a sight. Osmond watched all her emotions with the interest of one who tends the progress of nature from the first formation of the bud to its opening: all her observations were so just, and her exclamations so full of genuine feeling,

that every time he gazed upon her and heard her speak, his conviction increased that she was not the person she appeared to be.

As they were casting their eyes about them from the deck of the vessel, all at once they heard guns fired from various batteries, and, among others, from that of the small tower in the channel of the Bosphorus called Leander's Tower; and not long after they distinguished the cause of it, for a suite of magnificent barges pushed off from the imperial palace of Beshik tash, and, with the swiftness of the sword-fish, darted across the channel towards Scutari. The Sultan in person was proceeding to perform his noon-day devotions at a mosque built by his predecessor in that suburb. The beauty of the boats, with pointed prows, surmounted by gilded ornaments of the most elaborate workmanship; the singular neatness, grace, and dexterity of the multitude of rowers; and the awful figure of the Sultan, seated by himself under a canopy of cloth of gold, were the objects which principally attracted their atten-

tion. Then came a second boat, similar in all respects to the first, with the exception only of its being in readiness instead of being in actual service; after which followed the principal officers of his brilliant court, in boats of the most beautiful construction, without the distinction of the canopy, and containing fewer rowers, but perhaps more light and graceful than the imperial barges. The whole scene, as the pageant passed, gave an imposing idea of royalty, and whilst it excited the pleasing delight of novelty in the breast of Ayesha, it drove all common-sense from the head of Zabetta, and made her perfectly mad with rapture. All her anticipations of the wonders of Constantinople were fully realized: she looked at everything with delight, and longed only for the moment when her dreams of greatness might also be realized.

The barges of the Sultan had scarcely reached their landing-place at Scutari, when Osmond remarked one of similar character, with a crowd of rowers dressed in the same manner, that is, with the small Bostangi cap and the white

muslin shirt, coming from the Seraglio Point, and apparently making directly for the saique. The sea foamed with the splash of the oars and the exertion of the rowers. Those who knew Constantinople, immediately recognised it to be the boat of the Bostangi Bashi, the dreaded police-officer and comptroller of the Bosphorus. Every one on board the saique was delighted that so fine a boat would pass so close, and rushed to the poop of the vessel to enjoy the sight. What was their surprise, however, to perceive it steering straight for the side of the ship, and then dashing alongside with the swiftness of the wind! Curiosity now yielded to fear; every one became alarmed at so dangerous a visit; each feared that it might be intended for himself: so capricious are human destinies under a despotic rule! Stasso and Mustafa approached the place where their master stood. Ever since the stealthy disappearance of Cara Bey from the vessel at Elegri, Osmond had felt that it foreboded no good, and they participated in that feeling. To their surprise and horror,

the first person who met their eye as they looked into the boat alongside, was the wretch himself, with that look of arrogance for which he was so remarkable, whilst his general bearing was that of one in authority. He was dressed in the richly-embroidered costume of a Chaoush attendant upon the Capitan Pasha, with a brocade turban and a long knife in his girdle. The Bostangi Bashi was seated in the place of honour, whilst Cara Bey appeared as an attendant officer; and, apparently acting under the orders of that chief, he stepped on deck, swelling with importance, and exhibited in his whole demeanour a mixture of petty exultation and ferocious doggedness. He said in a loud voice:

"There is one Osman on board, who calls himself a Frank — where is he?"

Osmond immediately stepped forward; and, facing his old enemy with a boldness and determination which greatly discomposed him, said, "I am the man you mean; what can you want with me, villain that you are?"

Appearing to give little heed to his words,

Cara Bey proceeded, "There is also one Mustafa Tatar, and one Stasso, who is also called the Boshnak—where are they?"

"Here they are," said Osmond; "they are my servants—who dares take them from me?"

"Bismillah! in the name of the Prophet!" said the other with the greatest self-importance: "Here is the boat of his excellency the Bostangi Bashi — haste—get in."

"I am an English subject," said Osmond, "and am not to be molested with impunity; these men are my servants, and are only commanded through me. We know who you are; it is but the other day that you were branded in the forehead as an outlaw; how is it possible that you can now be acting from authority? Explain, O man!"

On hearing these words, Cara Bey's countenance spoke the whole villany of his heart; he would have drunk the blood of Osmond, had he been completely in his power. His turban was thrust so closely over his eyes that the brand which had been alluded to could not be seen; but the wretch felt it there, and it kept

the feeling of his revenge alive, acting like a blast upon a burning furnace. With a sullen tone, speaking through the fury which almost choked him, he said, "No more words, *haidé* —come along, the Aga waits."

"If your Aga is at hand, I will speak to him," said Osmond, "and not waste my time with such a wretch as you." Upon which he left the saique, followed by Mustafa and Stasso, and, entering the great barge, addressed himself to a stern and inflexible-looking Turk of high degree, who was seated on a carpet, propped up by cushions.

Having gone through the preliminary forms of politeness, Osmond, adopting the Turkish form of idiom, said, "My Aga, may you live many years! what business is this? We are straightforward men; I am an Englishman, and my country, thanks to Allah! is in friendship with the Osmanlies. You are an upright man, by the blessing of God! but where have you found this fellow?" alluding to Cara Bey. "This is a bad man, do not enter into his frauds. He is a *dinsiz*, a fellow without reli-

gion—a Yezidi. It is a shame for your government to make use of such a man."

The boat had already put off and was bending its way with swiftness towards the city, when the Bostangi Bashi, with perfect composure and ease of manner, answered, "What can I do, my friend? I act upon the orders of my superiors; whatever is right is right, and whatever is wrong is wrong. If there be fraud, fraud will be discovered; if not, there is no harm done."

"But where are we going?" said Osmond. "This must not be; I am an Englishman, my government will not allow this." And having said thus much, he turned himself towards the saique, where he saw his Ayesha apparently convulsed with grief. There was a beseeching look in her attitude which seemed to say, 'Why do you abandon me?' But what could he do? Despair had arisen in his breast: he would have used violence to those around him; but still, what could he do?

"Patience, my friend," said the Bostangi Bashi. "This is Constantinople; things are not

done here in a corner. The ass does not die of water here without its being known.* *Insh-allah!*—please Allah! all will be well."

On looking round him, Osmond was surprised to find that Cara Bey was not in the Bostangi Bashi's boat. The fact is, that the artful intriguer having, through the means of that superior officer, secured the persons of Osmond and his servants, remained on board the saique, to take under his care the partner in his wiles—the infamous Zabetta, and her now wretched daughter. The appearance of Cara Bey produced widely different effects upon the two women. The mother, on seeing him, understood at once the tendency of his conduct, and was in her heart delighted. The daughter, on the contrary, abhorring him from the very bottom of her soul, frightened by the appearance of authority with which he was accompanied, and fainting from apprehension at seeing her lover thus taken from her and apparently in his power again, relapsed into a

* This alludes to a well-known trick in Turkey, of swelling a beast up with water, in order to make him look fat, preparatory to its sale.

state bordering on madness. The day which had been so auspicious, which seemed fraught with every bliss, all at once darkened, her prospects were blighted, and from a state of enchantment she was thrown at once into the veriest depths of woe. The monster having procured a boat, made them get into it, and ordered the boatmen to follow the barge of the Bostangi Bashi, and land them at the place which he should point out. During this short passage, Cara Bey was in close conversation with Zabetta; whilst the tears of the unfortunate maiden did not cease to flow,—a circumstance which under her closely clasped veil she carefully hid from her odious persecutor.

"Now, Zabetta," said he in so low a tone that he could not be overheard, "open well your eyes; all our future prospects depend upon your conduct this day. The Capitan Pasha is my protector. I have told him my story. He has taken me into his service; I am one of his chaoushes. I have described your daughter's charms to him: he is delighted. He wanted just such a person to present to the *Padishah*, the Sultan, and your fortune

is made. But we must get rid of the Frank, happen what will; by right or by wrong, he must go. Still, there is caution to be used. His nation is all-powerful here: his ambassador is a misfortune. We must not let our right hands know what our left are doing. Have you understood me?"

Zabetta was bewildered with the importance of the subject which was so suddenly presented to her mind. Never having been accustomed to come in contact with such great names and such great interests before, she became giddy with amazement. "Tell me what I am to do," she said, "for my soul is shrivelled up."

"We are now going before the tribunal of the Grand Vizir. You will see many things. You must not be frightened. Above all, keep your daughter quiet. You will hear a petition read, which I have caused to be written as coming from you, in which you complain of the Frank, who by his frauds has forced you to leave your home. When you are called upon, you must boldly swear to this. I have got witnesses to support your assertion. Open your

eyes, and give your ears up to all that passes. You must not thwart what I have said, or the Pasha will never forgive me. Our cause cannot fail when he interferes; for who dares oppose his wishes? Should we succeed, then we may walk with our heads erect, and with a flower under our ear."

The Bostangi Bashi alighted at the landing-place nearest the Seraglio, where he found his horse and retinue waiting his arrival. Having delivered over Osmond and his servants to the care of a chaoush and some armed men, he ordered them to follow him, and took his way to the Imperial Gate, or, as it is called in Europe, the Sublime Porte. Cara Bey, with the women, landed at the fish-market, and proceeded thither also. They found the principal street leading to the palace thronged with a crowd expecting the passage of the Grand Vizir, who was proceeding in state to the public divan, or council, which is held daily, excepting Fridays, at the palace, for the despatch of public business, as well as for hearing and deciding causes of all descriptions.

They had not waited long before the procession began; and, as a specimen of Oriental manners and grandeur, nothing could be more characteristic. The Grand Vizir, the greatest officer of state after the Sultan himself, is preceded by the Chaoush Bashi, by a band of chaoushes and their inferior officers, bearing wands of office in hand, and accompanied by the principal dignitaries of the empire, who, surrounded by their numerous and richly-dressed attendants, swell the procession into an immense throng. The whole is accompanied by the Grand Vizir's guard of Albanians, and closed by a body of more than four hundred horsemen; and they slowly pick their way through a dense crowd of the inhabitants, who are ever ready to make a thousand exclamations, praying for the prosperity of their minister. Upon the days of divan, it is to be remarked, three officers appointed for that purpose, proceed one hour before sun-rise to the gate of the Serai, or palace, there to make certain prayers preparatory to the arrival of the ministers of state; and, when those ministers appear, they salute

them in a loud voice with appropriate expressions, naming them one after the other by their names, as they appear and pass on. The Pashas, for such is the etiquette, lose their wonted gravity of aspect at the sight of the palace; they put their horses on the full gallop some thirty or forty paces from its entrance, and then range themselves in due order on the right of the first court, waiting the appearance of the Grand Vizir. The Janissaries and the Spahis dispose of themselves in the second court under the galleries, the former to the right, the latter to the left. Each individual dismounts from his horse in the second court; but the gate of the divan is not opened until the arrival of the Grand Vizir, nor until a prayer has been repeated for the souls of the deceased sultans, and for that of the reigning sovereign.

The Grand Vizir, a venerable-looking old man, with a snow-white beard, wearing his white conical cap of office on his head, clad in a cloak of cloth of gold, covered with sables of immense value, appeared in due time, and, as he

passed, ever and anon saluted the populace by placing his hand gracefully on his breast, and then extending it right and left towards the people.

Osmond was so taken up with the scene that he almost forgot the extraordinary and difficult situation in which he was placed. When the proper etiquettes had been performed previously to opening the divan, and all the great dignitaries had proceeded to the stations allotted to them, those who had business to transact made their way into the great saloon or hall where the council was held.

The great officers, and the Cazilesquers, who are the principal functionaries of the law, by way of showing their respect, never enter the hall but as accompanying the Grand Vizir, and then all prostrate themselves before him to the ground. When he, the first minister, is seated, the two great lawyers take their seats on his left, which among the Turks is the place of honour, the Cazilesquer for the affairs of Europe next to the Grand Vizir, and the other, for those of Asia, second in

rotation. After these come the lord high treasurer of the empire, the Defter-dar, and the Haznadar Aga, with their attendant officers. The Vizirs, of whom there are six, with the simple title of Vizir attached to them, are men learned in the law, who attend the divan, but do not give their opinions unless called upon by the Grand Vizir, and they are seated in due rotation; and if there be any Begglerbeggi, or governors of provinces, or distinguished men, the Grand Vizir generally gives them a place after the Vizirs. At the divan which we are now describing, the Mufti of Kars, who enjoyed great reputation as a lawyer, was allowed to seat himself at the end of the line of the dignitaries.

The business of the day opened with the affairs of finance. The Chaoush Bashi was first enjoined to proceed to the door of the treasury, and remove the seal, which is always impressed upon it, and to take it to the Grand Vizir himself, who, having examined it, assures himself that it has not been touched since the last inspection. The stronghold is then opened,

either for the purpose of placing in it, or taking from it, such monies as are necessary for the payment of the troops or other purposes; after which the Grand Vizir gives over his seal, which he draws from his breast, to the same officer, who again closes the door and applies the seal to it. To the affairs of finance succeed those of war: every detail relating to the army and to its destination was then brought under consideration. Matters relative to the demands of foreign ambassadors were discussed, and answers were ordered to be made out. All orders emanating from the Porte, imperial firmans, passports, patents for exclusive privileges, and decrees for the accumulation of privileges, were next brought forward and despatched. The Reis Effendi, the minister for foreign affairs, then received from the hands of the Grand Vizir all the necessary despatches to be forwarded: if only those of ordinary business, they received the seal of the Chancellor, but, if secret and confidential, the Grand Vizir stamped at the bottom the seal of the Sultan, which he affixes

with his own hand, covering it with the proper ink.

Osmond, at the end of the great saloon, had waited with patience for the moment when his case should be brought under discussion; at one time giving up his attention to the novel scene before him; and at another, considering what was likely to be the result of this his present dilemma; for such he was sure it must be, since that wretch Cara Bey was evidently at the bottom of it. His thoughts, too, were full of Ayesha. What had become of her?—where was she likely to go?—who would protect her?—were questions which he put to himself, without being able to solve them. When he found his fears gaining ground, he put them to flight by the reflection that, being now within call of his natural protector, the Ambassador of his country, it was ridiculous to suppose that any harm, beyond a little delay, could possibly accrue to him. As soon as he should have discovered upon what pretext he had been dragged to this tribunal, he concluded that it would be time to de-

termine what was to be done. He had a friend in Wortley, who he knew would fly to his rescue at a moment's notice. In short, he so satisfied himself that the whole of the proceeding against him could only be founded upon the falsehood and machinations of a wretch not worthy of notice, that he fully expected on that self-same day to take up his quarters in the British palace, to see his friend, to receive the news of the state of his family, and, what was of more consequence to him than everything else, to ascertain what had become of his beloved mistress.

Mustafa, however, did not view the case with quite so light a heart as his master. The tribunal of the Grand Vizir, in his eyes, had always been one of the last places at which he would wish to appear; and as he was well aware of all the tricks practised in Turkish courts of justice, he anticipated nothing but a disastrous result, particularly when he found himself opposed to such an antagonist as Cara Bey. He had anxiously looked about the court for some dragoman

belonging to the embassy — some friend to whom he might apply for help; but he was unlucky, he saw no one. Stasso's spirits had forsaken him; they had been so much excited by the pleasure of having at length reached the capital in safety, that the reaction was overpowering: he could almost have wept. The only consolation which both he and Mustafa now felt, was in contemplating the regret which their master must feel that he had not allowed them to promote the throwing of Cara Bey into the sea, at a time when it might have been done with so much ease. But that moment was gone by, and the wretch was still before them!

CHAPTER V.

Of all affliction taught a lover yet,
'Tis sure the hardest science to forget!
Eloisa to Abelard.

THE usual business of the day having been despatched, the court was open for the trial of causes between individuals. And here it must be said in favour of Turkish justice, however great may be the reputation of its judges for venality, that the poor man has an opportunity of making his complaints heard, and of seeking redress against the oppressions of the rich. In cities distant from the seat of government, justice is not of such easy acquisition, for the traffic of false witnesses is immense, and many an honest man has been known to lose his for-

tune and his life through their means. One of the reasons why justice is presumed to be better administered in the divan of Constantinople is, that the Sultan in person is supposed to be present, lending his ear to all that is going on, at a small window situated just over the head of the Grand Vizir, whilst his person is only skreened by a blind.

Still the corruption is great. A cause had just been tried which had interested Osmond very much, owing to the insight which it gave him into the manners of the capital and the mode of obtaining justice. A Jew broker and a Turkish grocer, two rogues of the first quality, had entered into a league to defraud an Armenian merchant. The Jew went to the Armenian and said, "I have found a buyer for a large assortment of your goods, sugar, coffee, spices, &c.; he is an honest man, and one upon whom I can depend — will you sell?" The Armenian agreed; and saw the grocer, who brought him, by way of lure, one thousand piastres in advance, and in consequence obtained possession of the goods. The

grocer appeared at the tribunal of the Grand Vizir as prosecutor of the Armenian, swearing that he had paid in full, and complaining that the Armenian avowed having received only one thousand piastres of the amount. He backed this by the testimony of two false witnesses. After much litigation, the Vizir recommended the parties to settle their differences by arbitration: which being done, a compromise was made; the Armenian lost two-thirds of his property, the Turkish grocer marched off triumphant, and kicked the Jew broker out of his shop for daring to ask a share of the spoil!

When the parties interested in this affair had left the court, nearly at the close of the day, Osmond's case came on. He was waiting with impatience to see who would be his accuser, when a rather shabbily-dressed Turk, with a large caouk bound with a piece of linen over his eyes, stepped forward, and seemed in readiness to proceed to business. The Vizir having asked the attendant Chaoush, "Which is the next cause to be tried? Where is the plaintiff? who is the defendant?"—

The Chaoush, showing the usual document, answered, "This is your excellency's order."

The Grand Vizir then said to the Cadilesquer, "Sir, let this petition be read; and be careful that the cause be tried according to the strictest rules of justice, so that I may not again be referred to."

The Cadilesquer exclaimed, "Chaoush, let the parties stand forward, side by side!"

Upon which, Osmond was called to stand forward by the Chaoush: which he did, without exactly knowing what was about to happen to him, and was followed by Stasso and Mustafa. The shabbily-dressed Turk, whose name was Mehemet Aga, was also called, and stood up near Osmond.

The Chaoush then addressing the judge, said, "These are the parties: this man, Mehemet Aga, is the plaintiff, and this, Osman Aga, the defendant."

The Cadilesquer instantly addressed Mehemet Aga: "So, friend, this is your petition. You here set forth that you seek for justice, not for yourself, but for your relation, a woman,

one Zabetta Kadun, who claims redress for her wrongs. What do you require from this man ?" pointing to Osmond.

Mehemet Aga answered—"My lord, my relation, the woman Zabetta, complains that, by divers frauds and cajoleries, this man inveigled her and her daughter from her house, and has, under one false pretence or another, drawn them hither, with the intent of disposing of them as slaves. She asks the protection of your excellency, that she may be rescued from the designs of this man, and be no longer open to his molestation."

The Cadilesquer then turned towards Osmond and said, "This is a new and strange case. —Well, Osman Aga, what do you say to this? We frequently hear of slaves being brought from Circassia, and are acquainted with respectable merchants who acquire them according to established rules; but it is new to see women, who are the subjects of our lord the Sultan, brought to Constantinople as slaves. Speak, what answer have you to give to this accusation ?"

Osmond was so much disconcerted by the strangeness of the whole proceeding, that for some time he was unable to answer; but at length, seeing that there was a deep plot laid against him, in which the wiles of Cara Bey were but too plainly perceptible, he determined to oppose nothing but the plain truth to all that should be alleged against him, and to leave the rest to Providence.

"I declare," said Osmond in the most impressive manner, "that the accusation, from beginning to end, is an utter falsehood! I am an English subject, and I insist that some one be instantly sent to the Ambassador of my country, who will satisfy you on that head. The woman to whom my accuser alludes, has followed me of her own accord. I was the means of saving her and her daughter from the hands of a villain who had carried them off by force. She is free to go whithersoever she pleases. The whole accusation is false!"

The Cadilesquer exclaimed, "How is this? You can be no Frank! Your language, your

dress, your name, your whole appearance, bespeak you to be otherwise. Besides, if you be a Frank, how came you to be the protector of Mahomedan women?"

Osmond to this answered — "The woman Zabetta, the complainant, is not a Mahomedan woman; she might have been such once, but she is a Greek. She attended the Greek church in Georgia."

Upon hearing these words, a woman entirely veiled came forward with great animation, and exclaimed, "What words are these? I a Greek woman! I am a Mahomedan woman, and Osman Aga knows it well; let him answer to my accusation with truth, and not with lies!"

The Cadilesquer seemed to be much puzzled as the cause proceeded, and consulted at various times with his colleagues. A reference was made to the Grand Vizir, who ordered that the great head of the law, the Mufti, should be consulted; and a note was sent to him with a short statement of the case, as is usual in questions of any difficulty.

The difficulty that chiefly perplexed them was, whether, the accused person being a Frank, the law for carrying off Mahomedan women could be put in full force against him, seeing that the Ambassador of his nation might take it up as a national question. This was the point which Cara Bey and his patron, the Capitan Pasha, attempted to avoid, for probably, by an immediate appeal to the English Ambassador, Osmond would have been liberated; but, as ill-luck would have it for our hero, the Mufti of Kars, who by a strange fatality had been present all the while, seeing that he could throw great light upon the subject, and happy to have an opportunity of revenging himself upon Osmond for his rude treatment at the time of the controversy, stepped up to the Cadilesquer, and disclosed to him all that he knew of the case, making thereupon his own comments.

This explanation was fatal to Osmond. The judge, convinced by the testimony of one of the mufti's reputation, that Osmond had been guilty not only of what he was accused,

but of a great deal more, put an end to the proceedings, saying that he required no further investigation, and no other witnesses; and committing Osmond, Stasso, and Mustafa to the hands of the chaoushes, he dismissed the parties: upon which, there being nothing more to be done, the Grand Vizir arose and returned to his palace.

During the course of the proceedings one of the chaoushes, a man of respectability, had recognised Mustafa for an acquaintance; and knowing him to belong to the British Embassy, he immediately mentioned this to the Cadilesquer, who, fearing to incur censure for retaining him, ordered his dismissal.

Osmond was hurried away with violence, and treated with insolence. From the hands of the Vizir's chaoushes he was delivered over to another set of men, who seemed to have a method in the tone and manner of their insolence. They were conducting him and his servants through different chambers of the palace, when they were stopped by the chaoush, Mustafa's acquaintance, who announced to them

that, by the orders of the Grand Vizir, Mustafa was allowed to depart.

The suddenness, the hurry, the abrupt manner in which he had been carried away, had scarcely allowed Osmond time to collect his thoughts; and it was only when his steps and those of his conductors were stopped, and he was informed that Mustafa was about to be free, that the hope of immediate release came to his mind. He then made a resolute stand. He inquired whither he was about to be conducted; and protested against the violence with which he was treated.

Among his conductors, there was one man, enveloped in a large cloak, apparently wishing to escape observation, who came forward when this delay took place, and, the people looking to him for instructions, by his gestures intimated that no indulgence was to be shown to Osmond. Osmond, seeing that resistance was hopeless, asked permission to write a letter, which he wished to send to Wortley; but that was also denied him. His last resource was to request Mustafa, speaking in English,

to go at once to Mr. Wortley, and inform him, from the beginning to the end, of all his adventures, and to beg that the Ambassador would instantly interfere in procuring his release, should he not be put to death in the mean while. He desired also that the Ambassador might be informed of the interest which he took in the fate and well-being of Ayesha, and that every assistance should be given her; and requested Mr. Wortley, if possible, to take both the mother and daughter under the protection of the British Embassy. He would have said much more, but, his conductors becoming impatient, they stopped all farther communication, and hurrying him along to the sea-side, compelled him and Stasso to enter a well-manned boat which was there in waiting. Having so done, they pushed from the shore, and pulled away into the open sea with the greatest velocity. It was then that the mysterious man, who had kept so closely concealed, showed himself at the margin of the sea, and in him Osmond discovered the eternal Cara Bey.

It will be necessary to explain that, when Cara Bey left the saique at Elegri, he had done so with the intention of putting into execution the plot which has here been developed. Whilst, impelled by the thirst of revenge, he sought for the destruction of Osmond and his two attendants, he also hoped that he might take advantage of the ambition of Zabetta, and of the beauty of her daughter, to further his views. Making his way sometimes on foot, sometimes mounted, and being well acquainted with the country, he managed to reach Constantinople two or three days before the vessel. He at once proceeded to the palace of the Capitan Pasha. Owing to the frequency of his presents, and to his own ingenuity in intrigue, he had succeeded in securing that great officer as his protector; and on this occasion, when he appeared before him, notwithstanding the disadvantage of being empty-handed, and the tale of ruin and disaster which he had to relate, he so well knew how to advance his own interests and to ingratiate himself, that he succeeded at once in being

appointed one of his chaoushes. The principal cause of this success was, in all probability, the interest created in the breast of his patron by that part of his story which related to Ayesha. The Capitan Pasha, it seems, had felt for some time that his influence with the Sultan was on the decline, and was anxious to find a good opportunity for recovering it. When Cara Bey described the charms of Ayesha, and represented the possibility of securing her as a present to offer to the Sultan, he was elated with joy, and determined to leave no effort untried to obtain possession of her. The character and views of the mother appeared to him admirably adapted to forward his object: her history too, placed her precisely in the situation in which he wished her to be. But as Cara Bey gradually developed the story of the maiden, showing her love of Osmond, and that it would be necessary to get rid of him, the Capitan Pasha began to foresee difficulties, and was not quite so sanguine in his expectations.

"You say that she is beautiful?" said the Capitan Pasha to his protegé, as they were closeted together in one of the small rooms in his palace.

"Let me tell your excellency," said Cara Bey, "that in Turkey, in Persia, in Greece, in Georgia, and in all the various countries through which I have travelled, I never saw anything that could approach her beauty! But that is not all: she is the most accomplished maiden that was ever known. Ask the Mufti of Kars, and he will tell you what great reputation she has acquired."

"But how came she known to the Frank?"

"It was by accident, on the terrace of the house at which he lodged. He, it seems, asserts, from certain ornaments which he has discovered on her dress, that she must belong to his nation. The woman who calls herself her mother, is capable of any act, and it is possible that there may be some truth in what the Frank asserts; so much greater, therefore, is the necessity for getting rid of him."

"And how can that be done?" asked the

Capitan Pasha. Upon which, Cara Bey detailed to him the whole plot which he had devised for effecting that object. He said that, for a sum of money, he should certainly be able to secure some one who would swear that he was related to Zabetta, and who would appear as the plaintiff before the tribunal of the Grand Vizir against Osmond. A petition might be easily drawn up, in which so much of truth might be exhibited that it could not be totally denied by the man accused, and which would be sufficient to lead to an investigation; whilst their own assertions might be seconded by as many false witnesses as were necessary, who were always forthcoming at the corner of any street. The great object to avoid would be an appeal to the English Ambassador; and Cara Bey asserted that the Capitan Pasha's influence might easily avert that, and procure a sentence against Osmond upon his mere acknowledgment of having seen and known the women, thus invading the sanctity of a Mahomedan's harem.

"I fear that there will be great difficulty," said the Capitan Pasha, "if this man be really an Englishman. The English are all-powerful here, and will not be trifled with."

"We must act before any one is apprised of his arrival. He must be condemned, seized, and sent off at once," said Cara Bey most earnestly.

"What sort of a person is this Frank?" said the Capitan Pasha.

"He is a devil," said Cara Bey, all that he had suffered on Osmond's account coming in strong colours to his recollection. "He is much of a man!"

"What sort of a looking man?" was the next inquiry.

"He looks like an Osmanli to all intents and purposes. He is dressed like one; he talks the language so well that nobody would take him for a Frank. What can I say more?"

"Ha!" said the Capitan Pasha, "that is important; that will do. We can proceed against him now without difficulty. If a

Frank will make himself look like a Turk, and talk like one too, he must take the consequences. *Pek ayi!*—very well!"

It was evident that the great mistake which Osmond had committed throughout his journey, was quitting the appearance and characteristics of an Englishman, to assume those of an Oriental; for he thus lost his greatest protection. Dragged as a Turk before a Turkish tribunal, upon condemnation he was treated as a Turk. Cara Bey had thus acquired a complete triumph over him.

We now return to Osmond. There was a mystery in the manner and looks of those into whose hands he had fallen, which made him apprehensive that his life was in danger. The boat in which he had been placed, was one of the fine long boats, called *besh chiftehs*, used in making long voyages, either along the coasts of the Black Sea, or to the Dardanelles. It was rowed by a band of stout men, and steered by a serious-looking personage, who kept a profound silence. They rowed on without intermission throughout the

night, and, by the next morning, had entered the channel of the Hellespont.

During this interval, Osmond had full time to ruminate upon his present situation. Occasionally his mind would be visited by regret that he had not taken advantage of the many opportunities which had been afforded him of putting Cara Bey to death; for he, it was evident, was the author of his present calamity. But when he seriously reflected upon the awful responsibility of taking the life of a fellow-creature, he felt relieved that he had not given way to his feelings. His principal apprehension was for the fate of Ayesha. It was now evident, by the declaration which Zabetta had made of her being a Mahomedan, and by her whole conduct since they had reached the Bosphorus, that she was in league with Cara Bey. Although he had from the first been convinced that she was a woman of very indifferent character, yet it was only now that he was struck by the enormity of her wickedness. He shuddered to think of the danger in which Ayesha was placed. On

a former occasion he had depended, in some measure, upon the protection which her mother might have given her; but now that he had obtained a better insight into her character, that consolation had vanished, and he could only view her in the light of one of the most infamous of her sex, a plotter against her daughter's innocence. He concluded that the predicament in which the unfortunate maiden was now placed, was infinitely more perilous than when she was in the castle and the immediate power of Cara Bey. He never before had been so entirely wretched. On the former occasion he had lived in the hope of effecting her release in some way or other, and the excitement buoyed up his spirits; but now, thrown into the hands of the powerful chief of a powerful government, what could he expect but some wretched mode of death, or some future release when she, for whom he would have laid down his life, would be taken from him, perhaps for ever, to be shut up in the confinement of a tyrant's harem, there to pine away the rest of her life in hopeless misery!— Such was the

tenor of his thoughts, as the boat in which he lay was carrying him he knew not whither. Occasionally, he would turn himself towards his faithful Stasso, to endeavour to find consolation in his remarks; but he, too, was broken in spirit. They had endeavoured, each in their turn, to elicit from their conductors some information concerning their destination, but they could by no means extract a word beyond an unwilling "*Bakalum!*— we shall see!" or, "*Ne bilirim?* — what do I know?" Osmond had once or twice discussed the possibility in his mind, and even communicated his thoughts to his servant in Greek, of seizing the boat; but when they came to calculate their own unarmed strength, (for all arms had been taken from them,) as opposed to that of the crew, they found the scheme too ridiculously hazardous to attempt it.

At length they descried a ship at anchor, for which they steered. She was off Galipoli, and appeared to be in readiness to sail at a moment's notice. Osmond having disco-

vered from the mysterious steersman that he was to be put on board of her, and that her destination was Rhodes, determined to make one more effort to communicate with his friend Wortley; and, addressing him in so low a tone as not to be overheard, said, "I will give you five hundred piastres if you will deliver a letter for me at the British palace. Say, will you serve me?" The grave man again repeated "*Bukalum!*" but with so significative a glance that it amounted to an agreement. Upon which, tearing a page from a sketch-book which he always carried about him, he wrote with a pencil as follows:

"MY DEAR WORTLEY.—I have been forcibly seized, and am about to be put on board a ship bound to Rhodes. I suspect that one Cara Bey, a ruffian famous on the Russian and Persian frontier near Kars, now a chaoush of the Capitan Pasha's, is at the bottom of this act of tyranny. The rascal is to be discovered by the brand of a horse-shoe on his forehead. His object is to gain possession of a Turkish maiden of the name of Ayesha, either

for his own purposes, or to advance the ambitious views of one, by name Zabetta, who professes to be her mother. I have reason to think that Ayesha is not her daughter; but on the contrary, by certain indications, I believe her to be an English girl, who, by some means or other, has been stolen from her parents. I entreat of you, as you value my friendship, to seek out the abode of her mother, from whom you will elicit much that may secure my freedom; and, moreover, I wish you would endeavour to protect her and her daughter until I am released. Mustafa, I hope, will have informed you of the strange events which have led to my present situation: but I do not despair. I depend upon your exertions to obtain my release, unless the rascals in whose hands I am, should previously put me to death. Let my friends in England know that I am in good health.

"Ever yours, affectionately,

"OSMOND."

"I have promised the bearer five hundred piastres should he deliver this safe."

The boat had no sooner reached the ship than Osmond was put on board, accompanied by the steersman, who delivered him over to the charge of the captain, when Osmond at a proper moment slipped the letter into his hand.

He found that the ship was about to convey a Pasha of two tails to Rhodes, condemned to exile for having been found guilty of too much wealth, which, as a matter of course, was seized upon by the Sultan. Besides him there was a large assemblage of convicts, condemned to hard labour in the Arsenal at that place; whose fate Osmond and Stasso were doomed to share. The ship had apparently been detained until their arrival; for, as soon as they were embarked, she immediately got under weigh. The captain, who was a rough Algerine, scarcely gave himself time to look at the wretched Osmond and the still more miserable Stasso, but, ordering them to be taken care of with the other convicts, instantly busied himself with his duties.

As the vessel glided from her anchorage, Osmond, casting his eyes at the receding

shores, was lost in a feeling of despair and despondency at the utter misery of his situation. His adored Ayesha was present to his imagination in all her loveliness, and for the first time he felt that he must abandon all those endearing hopes of possessing her, which had formed the sole object of his past thoughts. His better reason whispered to him that he ought to make up his mind to forget her for ever; but neither his resolution nor his fortitude was yet equal to such a sacrifice. How could he forget that sentiment which had so identified itself with every feeling of his heart! Time alone could work out that consummation. With his present feelings, he vowed that, as long as he existed, nothing should ever deprive him of the consolation of living for her alone; and whatever might be his future fate, he determined never to abandon the hope of one day reclaiming her as his own.

CHAPTER VI.

La falta del amigo hace de conocer, no aborrecer.

Cejudo, Refranes Castellanos.

EDWARD WORTLEY was several years younger than Lord Osmond. He was eminently handsome. There was a certain bright and lively expression in his face which bespoke at once the ardour and enthusiasm of his character, and which was but ill-adapted to secure the reserve deemed so necessary in the profession which he had adopted. Whatsoever feeling engrossed his heart, was so quickly brought to the surface in the mirror of his countenance, that, without his lips giving it utterance, it was discovered, almost with the same truth that objects on the margin of a lake are seen re-

flected in its waters. Were it the custom for faces to pass an examination in Downing-street previously to the enrolment of a diplomatist, he certainly would have been rejected; he never could dissemble. It was well that his first essays in his profession were made in Turkey, where every speech and every feeling is made to pass to its destination through the filter of a dragoman; otherwise we doubt whether the interests of his country would not have materially suffered had they been entrusted to his management.

Both he, and the Ambassador to whom he was attached, had long been in expectation of hearing some tidings from Osmond. The last accounts they had received from him were when he was about leaving Bagdad; since which they had remained in ignorance, and began to be apprehensive for his safety. Piles of letters from his family were awaiting him; and from the anxious tone of those which they had themselves received, it was evident that his return home was as desirable as it seemed impatiently expected.

It had been a question decided by the Ambassador that very day, that a special Tatar should be despatched in quest of Osmond; and Wortley was in the very act of writing a letter to him, when his servant came into the room with greater haste than usual, followed by the tramping of a heavy pair of boots.

"What has happened?" said Wortley.

"Here is Mustafa," said his servant. And before Wortley could make an exclamation of delight and surprise, the long-missing Tatar stood before him.

"Why, Mustafa!" exclaimed Wortley; "in the name of wonder, where have you been? We had given you up for lost. Where is Lord Osmond?"

"Lost! yes," answered Mustafa slowly, and drawing a long sigh: "we have been lost, I believe; but we are come at last."

"Where is Lord Osmond?" repeated Wortley, with redoubled animation.

"We came in a saique from the Black Sea — we landed to-day."

"Is he in the house?" inquired Wort-

ley, making a rush to the door, with the intention of seeking him.

"*Ne belirim*—what do I know?" said Mustafa, strangely distressed by the question:—"No, he is not in the house."

"Then where is he?"

"What can I say?" said Mustafa, with the air of one making a great effort over himself—"He came, and is gone again."

"What say you? Gone?—whither could he go, but to this house?"

"He is gone though," repeated Mustafa, shaking his head at the same time, and looking most dejected.

"What has happened? In the name of Heaven! what has happened?" exclaimed Wortley, with intense anxiety in his tone and gesture, struck by the doleful looks of Mustafa—"Where is he gone?"

"We went on very well," said the Tatar, "until our good-fortune turned upon us; since then everything has gone ill. Shall I speak a lie?—no. If our Beyzadeh had not been a trifle mad or so, we should have done very

well. *Ama*—but that was not the case; and, therefore, *Allah kerîm*—God is great! as we say in Turkey."

"What can you possibly mean?" said Wortley, quite alarmed for the sanity of his friend. "Do you pretend to say that Lord Osmond is mad?"

"May you live many years!" said Mustafa, "and may all the English prosper! but when I say mad, I mean to say that he is occasionally mad, like his countrymen. Had he listened to my words, all would have been right; but he would not, and all is wrong."

"How is this? explain at once, Mustafa," cried Wortley; still more excited by his apprehensions.

"He does not know the Turks," said Mustafa, "and I do—that's all. Our Osmanlies, do what you will, are Turks, and never can act or think like Franks. By the grace of Allah! they are animals—what can I say more?"

"But is Lord Osmond to run mad for that?" said Wortley, not in the least able to

make out the meaning of Mustafa's explanations.

"When you hear the story, you will not be surprised at what has happened," said Mustafa. "*Ouf, amān! amān!*" said he, shaking the collar of his jacket at the same time, and blowing out a deep sigh, "our's has been a strange business!"

After a great deal more preliminary matter, which seemed to plunge the subject to be elucidated into greater darkness than ever, Wortley at length managed to guide Mustafa into a track which led directly into his narrative. He invited him to begin his story from the time of their leaving Bagdad, which was like putting him into the right road after having lost his way.

Mustafa then enumerated how frequently they had mounted and dismounted; he extolled some post-houses, and reviled others; he described how well they fared here, and how ill there; how fowls and rice were abundant at one place, and nothing but bread and sour milk to be found at another. He spoke

feelingly of the miseries which they had endured in Persia; and did not lose this opportunity of asserting that he had behaved most disrespectfully towards the fathers, mothers, and ancestors of all that worthy people. And at length, having reached the point in his narrative which brought him to the Armenian monastery at the foot of Ararat, he more particularly entered into the details of that part of his master's history, which had led to his present disastrous situation.

"*Wallah!*—by the Prophet!" said Mustafa, "it was then that our luck turned. May I eat Cara Bey's mother and sister, if it be not true that, from the moment we saw his castle, our misfortunes commenced! First, at Kars, my lord was struck with the sight of a moon-faced maiden. There he ran mad, there he wanted to make Franks of Turks —to convert a whole city of rogues and ruffians, whose profession it is to cheat and cut throats, into Christians and good men. And what did he get by that? he was nearly killed, and was thrust into prison; and if, by the

blessing of Allah ! he had not seized a rascal of a mufti by the beard, and threatened to shoot him, we should have been torn to pieces by a furious mob. Then, instead of running away when we might, as Allah is great ! we proceeded straight into the den of that lion Cara Bey, Heaven knows why ! only because Milord would be civil to his rogue of a lieutenant. And then, when we had been treated like slaves, made to fight against our wills, at length we had poison served up to us when dying of hunger. In fine, after God had delivered the fiend into our hands, my lord would not kill him, out of delicacy, but quietly delivered him up to the Russians."

"And did not the Russians put him to death ?" said Wortley, roused by Mustafa's narrative.

"Certainly, certainly," said Mustafa, "they did put him to death. They had him down upon his knees, and he cried, '*Amān ! Amān !*' and they pointed their guns at him ; but then, when Allah was about to deliver our souls from him, and men were beginning to cry

'*Shukiur*—God be praised!' who should step in and save his life but our master! It is true, the rascal was branded with a horse-shoe on the forehead, and he was kicked out of the camp like a dog; but still, he lives!—he lives, as sure as you sit there!"

"I recognize Lord Osmond in this," said Wortley; "he is too good a man to deal with barbarians."

"A man must be a devil," said Mustafa, "to deal with devils! How have I got on among them? It is now fifteen years since I have travelled the road, and see what I am! Mashallah! this mustache has not grown thus long for nothing!"

"And what happened after?" inquired Wortley.

"Why," said Mustafa, "we got on board ship at Poti; we were all happy to have left the rogue behind; and we put the women on board——"

"What women?" inquired Wortley, with animation.

"*Ey vah!*" exclaimed Mustafa; "don't you

know the story of the women? Mashallah! where have you been? Women — to be sure! had it not been for the women, we should now be smoking our pipes, with our caps on one side!"

"Tell me," said Wortley, "tell me all!"

Mustafa then, in a confidential tone, continued thus: — "There are two women: one, who is a misfortune, a bad one — a little old — who speaks for ever; in short, a devil! The other is a *peri*. *Akh!* who ever saw such a face —such beauty! She is the wonder of all Anadoli! — she is the daughter. My lord is become mad about her; that's the secret! The rascal, Cara Bey, carried her off from Kars; my Aga delivered her out of his hands! But for these women — may they perish! — we should all be in fortune's road!"

He then gave a description of their perils in the Black Sea, and touched with great feeling upon the re-appearance of Cara Bey in the vessel. "You will perhaps say that there are no such things as evil spirits upon earth, but had you seen that man stand before us

again, in the middle of the storm, you would have been convinced of the contrary. He is Satan in person, and that is the truth of it. All the Turks on board rose by one common consent, as soon as they saw him, to throw him overboard. A Yezidi, in their eyes, is worthy of death, on shore or on board; and into the sea he would have been plunged, had not our Aga been again visited by madness, or struck by some evil-eye to do that which he ought not, and, at the peril of his own life, he stepped in to save that of the wretch. For this piece of service, the first thing that happened on our arrival at Ortacui, was the appearance of the Bostangi Bashi, bearing in his boat this very Cara Bey in person; and before we could count our beads, our master, myself, and Stasso, were conveyed before the Grand Vizir, and accused of running away with Turkish women. In vain he swore that he was an Englishman; no one would believe him; he spoke our language so well, and looked so like a true believer, that all his assertions were useless; and, to crown our misfortunes, when we least expected it, up

jumped a rascal of a mufti, who said so much to the cadilesquer, that all hope of redemption was gone. Our Aga was carried off, placed forcibly in a boat, and I, by the blessing of Allah! was released. He was not permitted to write, but he ordered me to inform you fully of his situation, and to request you to protect the women. What more can I say?"

When Mustafa had finished his narrative, he could not refrain from tears, so much was he attached to his master. Wortley, from what he had heard, endeavoured to unravel a sufficiently connected narrative of his friend's adventures, in order to make an intelligible report of his present dangerous position to the Ambassador; and without delay quitted the distressed Tatar, ordering him to be in attendance. He then in haste sought out his excellency, to whom he disclosed what Mustafa had told him. The Ambassador, almost as much interested in Osmond's fate as Wortley, listened to the whole account with the greatest attention; but when he came to that part which related to the women, he

shook his head, as much as to say, this will be a difficult business to bring to a happy issue; for, from experience, he well knew how impracticable Turks were on that head. He saw the scrape into which Osmond had fallen, and, impelled by every proper feeling in his favour, determined to act with the utmost vigour until he should have extricated him. He, therefore, immediately sent for his principal instrument of communication with the Turkish government, the head dragoman of the embassy, and it was not long before he made his appearance.

Signor Trompetta, for such was his name, were he taken, *tale quale*, as he stood before the Ambassador, and placed in an English drawing-room to be stared at as a lion, would not fail to create as much astonishment by his appearance as he would by his acquirements. He was a tallish man, wearing on his head a sort of quadrangular pincushion, of the dimensions of a lady's footstool, covered with cloth, neatly padded with wool, and terminated at its lower extremity by a broad stripe of grey lambskin. This,

as he approached the Ambassador, making a long graceful bow, he took off with both hands, and showed a crimson skull-cap underneath, which covered his closely-shaven head. From the top of his shoulders to the tip of his foot, he was so entirely enveloped in loose and flowing drapery, that it would be difficult for any one to pronounce what might be the form and materials of his body, except that it was long, thin, and angular. An ample vest, buttoned at the throat, covered him from top to toe, confined in the middle by a large girdle of shawl. Over this came a cloth robe with short sleeves, above that a lighter one with large sleeves, and under his arm he carried another, so vast that it completely covered him all over when he presented himself officially before one of the Turkish authorities.

His countenance was made up of shrewdness, an habitual expression of obsequiousness, and quick remark. He had an arched nose, sharp grey eyes sunk deep in their sockets; a projecting chin; and a slight mustache covered his upper lip. Every hair excepting these

few was most carefully shaved off, so that his ears, his jaws, and his neck, were all completely bare, forming a strange contrast to the prodigal use of hair worn in modern times. His manners were those of a courtier, full of deference, polish, and grace. He was a complete master of five different languages, being able to read, write, and converse in them with almost the facility of a native. He had acquired English with astonishing accuracy, considering that he had never left Constantinople, daily writing official notes in it to the ambassador, and always using it when he talked to him. French and Italian being the languages mostly spoken at Pera among its great diversity of inhabitants, they were hourly practised. Modern Greek was the dialect spoken in his family and to his servants; and Turkish being the language of the court and the country, in that he was learned and eloquent. Of Arabic and Persian he had made a study, and was also conversant with Armenian. With these various tongues in his head, in daily use, and called upon to speak and write in them at any moment,

he never was known to make a confused mixture. Certainly, the station which he filled was one full of difficulty, in what regarded his own personal interests, and his case might be called that of many of his colleagues. He and they, mostly descendants from Venetian and Genoese families who had taken root at Constantinople during the time of its partial possession by those powers, were employed as dragomans in the European missions. They were, in fact, subjects of the Porte, although they enjoyed the protection of the power in whose employ they were, as long as that power was at peace with Turkey; but whenever war took place, their position became dangerous—dangerous in proportion as they had rendered themselves personally obnoxious during the transaction of the affairs which had passed through their hands. In their own defence, therefore, with the fear of war hanging over their heads, they are obliged to steer a middle course, doing their duty towards their employers, whilst they make the words in which that duty is communicated to the

Turkish authorities, as palatable as possible. It is their province to sweeten the brim of the cup whenever they have a bitter draught to present, ere they administer its contents.

> Così a l'egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi
> Di soave licor gli orli del vaso.

In the present case, the Ambassador, who was a straightforward man, making at once for his point without unnecessary circumlocution, stated in a few words the awkward predicament in which Lord Osmond had apparently placed himself, showing that it probably arose from his interference in favour of the women, and insisted that, in the representations made to the Turkish government, as a preliminary to all farther proceeding, he should be immediately released and restored to him, free from all harm.

Signor Trompetta, as soon as he heard mention made of women, instantly put on a look of serious apprehension, ominously shook his head, whilst at the same time he made a deferential bow.

"I fear that your excellency will find," he said, "that this will prove a difficult affair.

Whenever women are concerned, a Turk will scarcely listen to reason—he becomes entirely engrossed by passion."

"I am aware of that, Mr. Trompetta," said the Ambassador, "and am ready to make every allowance for Mahomedan prejudice. But, ignorant as I am of the real state of the case, whilst I can place every dependence upon the high character of so distinguished a nobleman as Lord Osmond, I must insist upon it that no delay be allowed to take place in setting him at liberty. You will go immediately to the Reis Effendi with this message from me, and request that none of the accustomed delays, so apt to be thrown into the discussion of every trifle, be here allowed to interfere. And in order to show that I am more than usually interested in this, I will desire Mr. Wortley to accompany you." Upon which he requested Wortley, who was present, to proceed to the Reis Effendi, saying, "This is a bit of diplomacy which I am sure I can safely confide to your management; although I must give you one precaution, which is, not to allow your zeal

in favour of your friend to carry you beyond the bounds of moderation, when you are brought face to face with the Turkish minister."

Wortley was delighted to be sent on such an errand. He felt that, if the delivery of the Ambassador's message to the Reis Effendi, in favour of his friend, were left entirely to the discretion of the dragoman, it would lose the whole of the vigour with which it was sent; and as he possessed the Turkish language sufficiently to ascertain the value of words in common use, he hoped, by his presence, to serve as a check upon Signor Trompetta's propensity to dilute the meaning of the message of which he was the bearer, into the sort of phraseology agreeable to a Turkish ear. They proceeded forthwith, taking Mustafa with them as a precautionary measure, and, having reached the residence of the minister, they were introduced into his presence, after passing through crowds of turbaned and bearded attendants.

The Reis Effendi, a most urbane Turk, full of courteousness and demonstrations of politeness, received Wortley with the greatest atten-

tions, whilst a smile of surprise might be seen to play over his features at his extreme youth. Having immediately ordered the never-failing chibouque and coffee, he inquired very tenderly concerning the health of the Ambassador.

"The *keif* — the spirits, of the Elchi Bey, are they in good order? *Inshallah* —please heaven, he is without ailment! *Benim garendashder*—we are brothers of the same bowels. He is an excellent man!"

To all this Wortley answered with appropriate expressions, helped out, in his incipient essays in Turkish, by the interference of his dragoman, who having clothed himself in his ample robe, which covered his person to the tips of his fingers, adopted at the same time that look of humility which Orientals are apt to assume when they stand before a great personage.

The Reis Effendi then complimented Wortley upon his youth; called him an *Elchjik*, or a little ambassador; and hoped, in very polite terms, that this his first essay in the transaction of business, would in time lead to good for-

tune, and to the dignities of a full ambassador. He illustrated this by quoting a line from a Persian poet, which was to this effect—' The dews of heaven dissolve drop by drop until they become a sea!'

Wortley was anxious to proceed to business, and, as soon as he could with propriety, evading the preliminaries of an audience, which, in all Oriental proceedings, are sure to take up the principal time, he addressed Signor Trompetta, and requested him to communicate to the Effendi the Ambassador's message, and to add, in as strong language as possible, his desire that no delay should take place in the execution of it.

Wortley paid earnest attention to every word which fell from Signor Trompetta, as he made his speech to the minister, and, when he had finished, endeavoured to give it strength by certain explanatory gesticulations, induced by the excited state of his feelings.

The Reis Effendi heard every word with the greatest patience and urbanity, and with all the proper coldness and gravity of a statesman.

He pretended at first to be totally ignorant of the case, saying only, "So! is it so! indeed! we will see!" as the dragoman proceeded; and when he had heard the whole statement, he placed his hand upon his beard, and stroking it, said with great composure, in a sort of suppressed tone, to the dragoman, eagerly watched by Wortley, "If there had been no women in the case, the whole thing would have been easy; but, as it is, there is much difficulty."

"Tell his excellency," said Wortley to the dragoman with much animation, "that the person whom his government has treated as a criminal, and condemned without a proper trial, is an English nobleman of the greatest worth."

The Reis Effendi replied, "My friend, when a diamond falls into the mud, its price is not diminished! Please Allah! all will be well! Tell our friend the Ambassador, not to be under any apprehension. Upon our heads be it! Inshallah! the good understanding that subsists between us is not to be disturbed for such a trifle as this." Then turning to Trom-

petta, he said in a suppressed whisper, "I think I have heard of this case, which was tried before our lord the Grand Vizir. The man pretended to be a Frank, but he proved to be one Osman Aga, known to the Mufti of Kars —a man of probity, who denounced him as a brawler and a maker of disturbance; he was accused of stealing women of the true faith, and bringing them hither for sale. This cannot be an English Beyzadeh."

Wortley, who heard the name of Osman mentioned, immediately caught at it, and exclaimed with some violence, "If his excellency knows anything of Lord Osmond, or of the affair in question, I cannot allow him to pretend ignorance of it. We will not put up with the usual procrastination; every moment lost, is so much accumulated misery to an innocent man. But should his excellency be ignorant of the case, let him question Mustafa, the Tatar, who accompanied him."

Upon this suggestion, to which the Reis Effendi assented, Mustafa was introduced, and having taken up an attitude of respect at the

end of the apartment, answered to all the questions which were put to him with great animation and interest; and, from the explanations which he gave, it was evident that the Osman Aga to whom the minister alluded, and Lord Osmond, were one and the same.

"Tell his excellency," said Wortley to the dragoman, "that there cannot now be the shadow of a doubt how my friend has been treated. He may at this very moment, for aught I know, be dragging out a miserable existence in chains, as a malefactor, in some desolate prison. How can his government answer to this accusation?" said the youthful diplomat with much wrath.

Signor Trompetta interpreted this speech with every qualifying interpolation, at which Wortley would have taken fire, had he sufficiently possessed the Turkish language to make his own explanations. The Reis Effendi, observing his agitation, said with great calmness, "My friend, when a man with the name of Osman, dressed, to all intents and purposes, as a true believer, speaking our language better

than I can, without a single token in his person by which he may be recognised as a Frank, is accused and brought before the tribunal of our Vizir, unprotected by his nation, what fault can be attributed to our judges, if they see in him one of their own nation, and refuse his pretensions of being an European?"

"My Aga insisted upon a messenger being sent to the English Ambassador," interposed Mustafa, to the astonishment of the Turks, "and he was refused; upon this I will take my oath. The whole of the affair is a trick of that son of the devil, the Yezidi, Cara Bey."

Wortley took up this observation of Mustafa's with increased violence; he inveighed against the injustice and nefariousness of the whole proceeding, whilst he insisted upon the dragoman giving to the Reis Effendi the whole force of his words; talked much of the vengeance which his government could and would take, if immediate satisfaction were not given for this insult offered to one of its most distinguished subjects; and desired that a Tatar might be despatched whithersoever Lord Os-

mond had been conveyed, with orders that he should immediately be set at liberty.

At this ebullition of violence, Trompetta was alarmed; but the Reis Effendi was calm. "Tell our friend the Ambassador," said the minister, "that we will investigate the whole affair, and that he will not have to complain of any backwardness on the part of the government of our Lord and Sovereign the Sultan to meet his wishes and give him redress. And let our young friend here be assured," addressing himself to Wortley, "that if the English Beyzadeh had kept to his own costume, had appeared in his proper character, and not interfered with our women, or with affairs that did not belong to him, he might have walked from one end of our country to the other with his head up, carrying gold at the top of it, without meeting with molestation or hindrance of any sort."

Upon this the conference broke up, and Wortley and his suite returned to the English palace.

CHAPTER VII.

The rose was yet upon her cheek,
But mellow'd with a tenderer streak.
Where was the play of her soft lips fled?
Gone was the smile that enliven'd their red.

The Siege of Corinth.

It is time to return to the unfortunate Ayesha, who, from the height of happiness, had been plunged into the depth of despair. Those dreams of future bliss in which she had indulged when she was last in company with her beloved Osmond were dispelled, and she now saw before her nothing but wretchedness. She felt herself so totally abandoned, and so entirely in the hands of Cara Bey and her designing mother, that there seemed to be no

other resource left than to lay herself down and die.

Cara Bey had prepared a small house for their reception, situated on the rope-walk leading from Galata to the arsenal and the palace of the Capitan Pasha. It was an obscure dwelling, facing the turreted wall that surrounds that suburb, consisting of two stories, entered by a low door, and covered by a shelving roof; and could attract no attention. The large burying-ground, and its thick wood of cypress-trees, situated close to it, afforded an open space for taking the air, and was one of the avenues to the British palace, as well as the promenade, of an evening, to the Europeans and Christian inhabitants of Pera and Galata. The uppermost story was occupied by the women; Cara Bey took possession of the lower apartments, and adopted every precaution that no man save himself should have access to the house; so jealous was he of the possession of a treasure which, in his estimation, was to lead him on to wealth and power. A woman devoted to him, attended as a servant; for Mariam,

from the day of Osmond's seizure, had absconded, and returned to her own country; so terrified had she been by Cara Bey's presence.

Cara Bey having, as he thought, entirely got rid of Osmond, exulted in malignant joy at being obstructed by no impediment in pursuing his schemes upon Ayesha. As soon as Zabetta was installed in the house, he lost no time in making known to her his success with the Capitan Pasha, who professed himself burning with impatience to view those charms, which were at once to seal his pardon with the Sultan, and secure a continuance of his favour. He told her, with all the precaution which his brutal nature could devise, that he had been obliged to describe her as his slave, and that as such he had offered her to that great dignitary.

"But what share in the profit am I to have?" exclaimed Zabetta in alarm, lest her interests had been overlooked. "She is mine; I am her mother."

"What share are you to have?" repeated

Cara Bey with a sneer. "Are you mad to ask such a question, when you are about becoming a lady of the imperial seraglio?"

"What do I know?" answered Zabetta in a tone of great ill-humour, the whole rapaciousness of the Greek beaming in her countenance: "There is much fraud in the world: professions are cheap; but such beauty as my daughter's is scarce. Let me know what share of the profit is to be mine, and then I will speak to you."

"Woman! are you mad?" again exclaimed Cara Bey, his satanic features breaking out into sudden passion. "Have we not been long agreed? Shall we be seated together in one boat, and the next moment be thrown separately into the sea? *Bé hé!*—This is much indeed."

"Agreed, indeed! What words are these?" said Zabetta. "You seem to have agreed with yourself to gain all, and to leave me without a cap on my head. You take my daughter, you sell her, and all I am to acquire is the prospect of getting into the seraglio. I

am no such fool, praises be to the Prophet! as not to see into a trick, however crafty. If prosperity were to be gained by cunning, mice would prosper."

"Do you talk thus to me, you weak one!" exclaimed Cara Bey, forgetting for a moment that he was no longer the independent chief—the governor of his stronghold. "How came ye hither, but for me? But for my protection you would at this moment be grovelling in the mire,—the slave of a Frank; whereas now you aspire to be a sultana. Open your eyes, woman, or, *Wallah billah!*—by the prophet! I will cut that unceasing tongue of your's from that never-failing mouth."

"You will, will you! wretch of a Yezidi!" exclaimed the infuriated woman, throwing her five extended fingers into his face. "*Na!*—that for you! You think me friendless, and therefore insult me. Because you are a swine, am I to be taken for a post? No: get you elsewhere to rub your hated hide. I have friends here. I will go to my husband's friend, the Mufti of Kars: he will protect me; he

will tell the truth. You talk of the Frank; would he were here! He is no pitiful dealer in stolen slaves: he is a man, if ever there was one. I will seek the protection of his Ambassador. Wherefore should I require the help of a branded outcast like you?"

At these words the devil-worshipper, thus taunted, thus excited, would have thrown himself headlong upon the reckless, perverse, wrong-headed woman. Her passions being once brought into a state of fusion, like lava running over a crater, flowing into an undefined channel, bore everything before them. Reason, common sense, prudence, every consideration gave way before her uncontrollable temper; and had she even seen the villain's knife at her breast, of which she was running a considerable risk, she probably would have continued her strain of volubility, taunting in never-ceasing reproach and invective even to the very verge of dissolution. He, however, did not give way to his passion; but, suddenly recollecting how much he had at stake were she to seek the protection of the

Mufti, and fearing to lose a prize, of which, by a little good management, he would certainly be the possessor, he all of a sudden lowered his tone, withdrew his frown, called up a demon's smile, and said:—

"Wherefore are you thus angry without a cause? Do I say that you shall not share in the profit, if profit there be? *Astaferallah!*—heaven forbid! I am not a man to enter into a fraud thus. But, as you love your daughter, reflect on whom we have to deal with. These are not merchants; these are not Jew-brokers. Here is, first, a lord high-admiral; one who with a wink of his eye cuts off a head; with a nod, sends a soul in haste out of a body. Then perhaps, who knows! will come the great blood-drinker in person, who says, '*Yok*, no,' and the heavens shake; and pronounces, '*Belli*, yes,' and the clouds, stars, sun, moon, laugh. These we have to do with. Shall we then inquire what profit there will be? Perhaps there may be gain, perhaps not. Let us but get our little finger into the hole, we will soon make it wide

enough to insert our whole body. Once installed in the royal seraglio, what is the eminence to which a woman of your wit may not attain? With the emperor's beard in one hand, and your daughter's charms in the other, you may ride over the universe. And will you then forego these advantages, to higgle over a few uncertain piastres? If you really are such a fool, you are not the woman I took you for."

These words, spoken with all the wile and cunning of a demon, calmed the woman's rage, and brought her round to a more correct sense of her interests. She gradually subsided into silence, and from silence into thought; she pondered for a while, and then said, "What is to be done? When shall we begin our operations? After so much kneading, when shall we put our loaves into the oven?"

"Patience—eh, patience, friend!" exclaimed Cara Bey. "An egg is not hatched in a minute, nor does the hen cackle before her time. This very night I have agreed that the great Capitan Pasha in person, *tebtil*—in disguise, is

to visit this very house. Be it your business to prepare the maiden for his reception; he must see her—of that there is no doubt: prepare a good cup of coffee, some fruit, and I will get wine. Do you hear? see you to this, and I will now proceed to conduct him hither. But be cautious, and, above all, keep your temper."

Zabetta, having given her assent to this, left Cara Bey to seek her daughter, whilst he betook himself to the palace of the great naval chief.

She found poor Ayesha, as usual, brooding over her miseries, wrapped in thought over the one object of her existence—her absent lover, and pining in hopeless, heart-breaking wretchedness. Her beauty, which had risen to the height of its splendour during her sea voyage, happy as she then was, without a wish ungratified, and with the prospect of future happiness before her, was now daily declining; the bloom had fled her cheeks, her brilliant eyes were dimmed by constant tears; the gracefulness of her healthy figure was gradu-

ally relapsing into extenuation. In vain she attempted to pierce into the gloom by which she was surrounded; no ray of hope broke in upon her. She felt herself doomed to be the victim of the being who she once thought was her mother, but who, it was clear, could not be so, now that she was about to sacrifice her to her unprincipled schemes of ambition and rapacity. To whom could she flee for help, imprisoned as she was in the toils of two such wretches as Zabetta and the monster Cara Bey? Her Osmond was far, far away. "*Ahi!*" would she frequently exclaim to herself, in a desponding sigh, "where are you, dearest, best, most adored of my heart! Are you pining in some lonely dungeon? or, oh horrid thought! have your ruthless enemies wreaked their utmost vengeance upon you?" This idea would so harrow up her soul that it almost deprived her of reason; scheme after scheme succeeded each other in her mind in rapid succession, until she scarcely knew where she was, or to whom she belonged. Often did she resolve

to leave the hated lodging in which she was immured, and to seek her way back to her father, who she now felt was the only being in the world to protect her. She thought, too, of the Mufti; but he, her Osmond's enemy—what could she expect to meet with at his hands but insolence and contumely?

The disconsolate Ayesha was plunged in the midst of such reflections when Zabetta entered her apartment. Putting on a face of sympathy, the artful woman approached her daughter with every demonstration of kindness.

"My soul, Ayesha," she exclaimed, "wherefore are you so sad? Are we not at Stamboul? is not the world smiling upon us? You, Mashallah! you — are you not the most beautiful, the most charming of maidens, and am not I your mother? What is there to make you sad? Open your heart, and let us live to all the delights which this charming place affords."

"Mother," said Ayesha, "be the enjoyments yours, since such you esteem them; I

will none of them. I have only one request to make, — Let me return to Kars — let me once more be restored to my father, and there let me live and die. Would that these charms, since such you are pleased to call them, could be wiped away, and replaced by looks the most homely! for then I should pass through this hated world unnoticed and unobserved. But wherefore repine, since Allah has so decreed my fate?"

"What say you? return to Kars!" exclaimed Zabetta. "Heaven preserve us! will you wrap yourself in your winding-sheet before your time? What is there so hateful in our present situation, which should make you wish to change it? Have you not all you can desire?"

"Mother, wherefore speak you so?" said Ayesha, interrupting Zabetta. "Subject to the power of, and living an inmate under the same roof as that ruffian Cara Bey! can that be a cause of rejoicing to us who have experienced so much misery at his hands? Wherefore do you not skreen me from him—

you who are my mother? Wherefore live we with him?"

"What words are these?" rejoined Zabetta, roused into anger; "and who are you, to speak to me thus? If I am your mother, you will act according to my wishes. You have been saved by Cara Bey from the hands of a Giaour — one who would have borne you away to his infidel country; and now that he is preparing the road for your happiness and your elevation, you call him ruffian, and would return to Kars! Are these the words of a Turkish maiden?"

Ayesha held her peace; she felt that it would be madness to venture to argue with one so perverse, and she determined to be silent.

Zabetta, in her usual manner, when her temper was roused, continued to give the reins to her volubility; and when she had exhausted herself, finding that Ayesha did not answer, she at length began to reflect that she was defeating her own purpose. She had undertaken to persuade her to receive the Capitan Pasha,

and she had not advanced one step in obtaining her end. She feared to encounter the inflexibility of her daughter, who, she knew by experience, would never deviate from what she conceived to be due to herself; and still she felt it necessary to forewarn her of the projected visit, in order to prevent any disagreeable consequences, were she to resist receiving it.

"How can you," said she, "continue to give up your thoughts to the Frank, now that you have the first agas of the country striving to obtain a glimpse of your charms? Ere this, he must have returned to his country, and have long forgotten us. After all, he is a Giaour. Infidels can no more mix with true believers, than oil with vinegar."

"I want to see no one," answered Ayesha. "If you ever loved your daughter, allow me to sit in a corner, and to remain unnoticed;—above all, save me from Cara Bey."

"Here is the great Capitan Pasha in person coming to see you this very evening," said Zabetta. "If you fear Cara Bey, seek his protec-

tion. He is one of the grandees of the government; you must see him."

"There is no man, according to our law, save the Sultan himself, who can force me to show my face to him," said Ayesha, with great energy; "and unless I am compelled by force, I will not see the Capitan Pasha, or any other man."

Zabetta, for once, succeeded in smothering the anger that was rising in her breast, when she heard this her daughter's declaration. She left her, without saying more, to busy herself in making the necessary preparations for receiving her important guest. She exerted her best endeavours to make a display of her knowledge in cookery; she brought to light the most savoury of pillaus; superintended the most fragrant concoction of coffee, and piled delicious fruits in appropriate bowls.

At about night-fall the door of the house was opened with caution, and the great Admiral in person, attended by two servants, and conducted by Cara Bey, entered, and was ushered into the apartments of the first-floor

He was a stout, broad man, of hale complexion, with a beard tending to red, though sufficiently mixed up with white hair to show that he had passed the middle age of life, and in his appearance exhibited little of that refined and courteous demeanour which is so frequently the characteristic of Turks. He was dressed as a galiongi, or sailor, which consists of a jacket highly embroidered, a pair of white trowsers, naked legs, crimson shoes, and a small turban. He was, besides, completely covered with the white cloak common to the Barbary states.

He seated himself with the ease and self-possession of one accustomed to command, whilst Cara Bey stood in an attitude of respect before him. Zabetta was in attendance to receive him, which she did with the most officious marks of attention and servile obsequiousness. But, scarcely noticing her, the great man, after having taken several whiffs from a magnificent pipe, said, as he looked around the room, "Where is Ayesha? wherefore is she not here?"

Zabetta immediately stepped forward and answered, "Heaven preserve your highness! the maiden is abashed. She is timid, and is fearful of appearing; she will soon come. Your highness must forgive her. We are poor folks; we are not accustomed to such visits. *Mash-allah!*—May Allah protect you! Let me intreat you to take some coffee made by my unworthy hands."

Upon this she served up the coffee, but during this operation, Cara Bey, who acted as an attendant, appeared ill at ease, and anxious at the non-appearance of his victim. He whispered Zabetta to go and force her daughter to appear. Zabetta, apprehensive of her inflexibility, and fearful of producing a scene, did not give a ready ear, but continued to oppress her guest with her volubility and officiousness.

"*Haniah Ayesha?*—where is Ayesha?" again repeated the Capitan Pasha, as he sipped his coffee.

"Go bring her," said Cara Bey to Zabetta, as if there was no difficulty about it, although, at

the same time, he made a sign to her with such a frown on his countenance that his anger and impatience could not be mistaken. "She will come immediately, my lord," said he to the chieftain; "she is only in the upper room, and will appear in a minute; she is a child, and knows no better."

Zabetta then proceeded, with slow steps and a hopeless manner, to seek her daughter. She found her in a state of great excitement. She had heard the arrival of the Capitan Pasha, and anticipated the miseries that were likely to fall upon her. "Mother!" she exclaimed, as soon as she saw Zabetta appear, "I know wherefore you come; but I intreat you to spare me; do not allow your daughter to degrade herself to a being lower than the most abject of slaves. I cannot, I will not expose myself to the gaze of men. They are neither my father nor my brother; wherefore should I be thus insulted?"

Zabetta was astonished at Ayesha's impetuosity, for she had ever been accustomed to find her the most gentle and tractable of beings.

There was no time for discussion, she saw how hopeless was her attempt, and returned whence she came, without saying a word more, and, gently opening the door of the room in which the Capitan Pasha was seated, she whispered to Cara Bey to come out to her.

"What has happened?" said the great man.

"*Bir chey yok*—there is nothing," said Cara Bey, "I will soon return."

Upon which, with his anger excited, the ruffian approached Zabetta, saying, "Wherefore does she not come? By the standard of Yezid! I will have her blood, if she does not come." And thus saying, he sprang up the stairs. Throwing open the door, he found the excited maiden standing in the middle of the room, with her veil fast clenched in her hand, drawn tightly over her person, in an attitude of dignified resolve.

"Wherefore will you not come, child of iniquity?" he exclaimed with a voice of rage.

"Wherefore come you here?" said she. "Who are you who dare intrude upon a woman's privacy? This is the harem—away!"

"Come with me; come immediately, or, by Allah! I will force you."

"Monster!" cried the intrepid Ayesha, "by what right do you command me? You are neither my father nor my brother. I stir not from hence."

"We will see!" said he, darting forward to seize her.

Ayesha fled from him towards the window, which was open, as if to throw herself from it, uttering at the same time a shriek which rang through the room in piteous accents. He sprang forward and seized her by the arm; she resisted with all her might, and at the same time continued to utter loud and repeated cries of distress. In the midst of their struggles, the door was thrown open, and in rushed the astounded dignitary, followed by Zabetta, who, having heard the cries and the sounds of the scuffle, had ascended in haste to ascertain the cause. As soon as Ayesha perceived her mother, she rushed towards her, leaving her veil in the hands of her assailant, and hid her face on her breast; her fine

form, and the whole beauty of her person, being open to the gaze of the astonished Capitan Pasha.

"What has happened?" said he, in an angry tone to Cara Bey, as he took his stand in the room. Looking with great intenseness of admiration upon Ayesha, and seeing in her one who probably on some future day might exercise great control over the Sultan, he felt a quick flash of apprehension lest she might exercise that control to the detriment of those who were now treating her so rudely. He went up to her, and with as soft a tone as he could throw into his voice, said, "*Korkma, guzum,* —fear not, my eyes! no one shall harm you. We are not come here to excite your displeasure; we are your friends; we wish your happiness. Inshallah! in a short time every pleasure will attend you."

"If you are a man," exclaimed Ayesha, with indignation in her accent, and covering herself at the same time with part of her mother's veil—"If you are a man, I ask you to protect me from that monster," pointing to

Cara Bey. "We are Turkish women—we are children of the true faith, and not worshippers of Satan, who acknowledge no law. Is not the harem sacred in Constantinople? Are we to be treated as heretics and base women, in the capital of the Sultan, and that under the very eyes of one of his ministers? Are you not ashamed to enter a harem by force, and to assail a weak woman when she is unprotected?"

"How is this, Cara Bey?" said the Pasha, addressing himself to the villain; "you told me these women were your slaves. Speak, man, how is this?"

"His slaves!" exclaimed Ayesha, the blood of indignation rushing into her face as she spoke, and fire flashing from her eyes. "We his slaves! by the head of the Sultan, sir! by every thing that is sacred, that man has spoken falsely. We are Mahomedan women; we belong to a man of worth; from his house the monster stole us by a dastardly stratagem, and, had it not been for the valour and sagacity of a Frank—of an Ingliz, whom, through his false accusations, he has perhaps ere this caused to

be put to death, we should to this day have been his prisoners. Let him show you the brand on his forehead, and ask him how it got there? You do not know him—you are dishonoured by his services, how much more then by his acquaintance! Shame, sir, shame!"

The grave Turk, who had never been acquainted with any women but those accustomed to submit blindly to his will, upon hearing these words, and seeing the energy and commanding manner of the beautiful person by whom they were spoken, felt a degree of awe and admiration which was entirely new to him. He never could have conceived that so much strength of character, and such great love of virtue, as were now evinced by Ayesha, could belong to woman; and, like one who sees some great natural phenomenon for the first time, he remained staring and stupified, not knowing what to say, or how to express his astonishment. Catching the infectious energy of her manner, and siding with her, he looked towards Cara Bey with indignation; and although he was conscious that he

had allowed himself to be implicated in that villain's designs, by lending himself to his proposals, still he had been left in ignorance of the greatest part of what Ayesha had now communicated to him.

Cara Bey, on the other hand, was writhing under the lash of the heroic maiden's words, with the feelings of one who, bound to the stake, was under the infliction of torture. He felt that she had now emancipated herself from his protection, and placed herself under that of a power over which he had no control. He cowered under her presence, as the worker of iniquity shrinks from the glare of daylight. All he could say, his hypocritical eyes turning towards the Pasha, was, "She lies—she is false —your highness must not believe her;—ask this woman," pointing to Zabetta; "she is her mother, and knows all."

The Capitan Pasha, happy to escape for a moment from the feeling of self-degradation which Ayesha's accusations had awakened in him, turned to Zabetta, and said, "How is this? Are you and your daughter slaves of

this man? or did he steal you from your home by stratagem? Speak!"

Zabetta had been as much thunderstruck by Ayesha's energy of conduct as Cara Bey. She stammered out a few incoherent words, which only the more evinced her confusion. "*Ne bilirim, Effendim*—What can I say, my lord?" she said. "We are Mahomedan women, that is true; we are your highness's slaves, do with us what seems best to you. We are poor folks, and are not accustomed to such a visit as this. Our Ayesha is a child, she does not know better, pardon her faults; we have always lived in the country, we are unacquainted with the ways of Constantinople. Whatever your highness may command, that we are ready to do; pardon us. Would not your highness take more refreshment? everything is ready below. *Bismillah!*—in the name of the Prophet! it is ready:" upon which she showed the way to the door.

The Capitan Pasha was not slow in taking advantage of the invitation of Zabetta; for, strange to say, the retiring, the tender, the

feminine maiden had more awed the rough sailor, the man of storms and violence, in the few minutes which he had spent in her company, than he could have been by the taunts and threats of many men. As he was about to go, he turned towards Ayesha, and taking one long admiring look at her, said, "*Korkma kizem*—fear not, my daughter, everything will go well with you, Inshallah!" Upon this he left the room, and at the same time ordering Cara Bey to follow him, said, "As you value your head, man, never approach that maiden again. She is ours."

The foiled wretch, clenching his hands with impotent rage, and looking at her under his dark and ominous brow, followed without uttering a word; and thus the grief-stricken Ayesha was once more left to her solitude. When she found herself relieved from their presence, she retreated to a corner of the sofa, and burying her face in her hands, resting them upon her knees, her fine hair streaming over her shoulders, and her graceful figure bending into a form which painters would love to design,

she freely gave up her heart to prayer, whilst her whole frame shook with the violence of her sobs. She called upon her Maker for protection, whilst the image of her lover came before her in all its bewitching charm and tenderness. She trusted that she was for the present delivered from her greatest affliction—the presence of the odious worshipper of Satan; but what were the trials and the sorrows still in store for her from the new protector which she had acquired, she dreaded to think!

CHAPTER VIII

Gent. Faith! once or twice, she heaved the name of father
Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart.

King Lear.

THE Capitan Pasha, upon leaving the house, gave Zabetta assurances of his future protection; recommended her to take the greatest care of her daughter; told her that she should want for nothing; and, as an earnest of this, made her, upon stepping from the door, a handsome present in money. Ordering Cara Bey to follow him, and the night being far advanced, he returned incognito to his own palace.

Zabetta could scarcely sleep, from delightful

anticipations of the grandeur and worldly prosperity in store for her; whilst Ayesha, from apprehensions of that same fate, was equally unable to close her eyes. The former had no other visions before her than of rich dresses, gilded palaces, fine equipages, splendid boats, and never-ceasing pleasure; the latter could not divest herself of the horror of being subject to the power of some rude and barbarous master, in common with other unfortunate women; whilst her own lover, her fond and devoted Osmond, might be wasting away his existence in a prison, forgotten and despised.

The succeeding day had not long appeared, when their attention was awakened by a knocking at the door. Zabetta looked out of the upper window, and, seeing several men in waiting, and among them a Frank, ordered the servant not to admit them before she had ascertained who they were.

"*Kim der?*—Who is it?" said the old woman, as she stood with her hand on the latch, and with her ear towards the door.

"*Atch*—open!" said a Turk.

"Who are you?" repeated the old woman.

"*Atch*—open!" again said the voice.

By this time, Zabetta, having thrown her veil over her head, had come to the assistance of the servant, and repeated the question in her shrillest tone of voice.

"Who are you, and what do you want?"

A different voice from the first then answered from without, "I am Mustafa Tatar. You know me, Zabetta Kadun. We are friends. Open."

Upon which, Zabetta huddling up-stairs to the room on her first-floor, ordered the maid to open the door and admit the visitors without farther delay.

Ayesha, too, who was alive to every noise, had ventured to peep through the lattice, and, perceiving a Frank among the intruders, her thoughts immediately recurred to Osmond. With her curiosity and her imagination all alive, she covered herself closely over with her veil, and, hoping that this visit might throw some light upon the fate of him whose existence

was identified with her own, she timidly determined to join her mother in the room below.

The visitors were five in number. A Chaoush of the Grand Vizir, and his attendant, a *Hoja*, or scribe, Mustafa, Signor Trompetta, and Wortley. Their visit was caused by the reception of Osmond's letter to Wortley, which we have already set before our readers, in which he was enjoined to discover the abode of Zabetta and Ayesha, and to elucidate from their lips such parts of the truth of his history as would be necessary to secure his emancipation. The Ambassador, upon perusing this letter, immediately made a communication of it to the Reis Effendi, and insisted that, for the better satisfaction of his excellency, who still remained convinced that Osmond was not an Englishman, but a Turk, an examination of the women implicated in his adventures should be made; and requested that one of his officers, together with his own secretary and dragoman, should be allowed to proceed to their abode for that pur-

pose. The Reis Effendi acceded to the request, and this visit was the result.

Zabetta was seated in a corner of the room, whilst Ayesha had taken post immediately behind her. The Chaoush, (one of the officers attendant upon the Vizir's court, and usually employed upon such like occasions,) Wortley, the dragoman, and the Turkish scribe, were seated opposite to them, whilst Mustafa stood near the door.

"Which is Zabetta Kadun?" said the chaoush.

"I am your slave," said Zabetta in a low and tremulous voice, evidently much alarmed at the whole proceeding, and keeping her face carefully concealed by her veil. "*Ne istersin?* —What do you want?" she continued to say, as she cast her eyes upon the different individuals before her.

There was an agitation and an incoherency perceptible in her whole manner, which showed that she was greatly affected by the appearance of those present. Wortley seemed to attract all her observation. She gave little heed to

Mustafa, who, being her old acquaintance, it might have been supposed would have inspired her with confidence; but, absorbed as she was by some predominant feeling, she was silent, and apparently greatly disturbed. Ayesha, too, remained perfectly motionless, her eyes fixed upon Wortley: whether from the consciousness that he was her Osmond's friend, or from some other motive, she seemed to be taken up with him alone, and heedless of the presence of all else.

"Now open your eyes," said the Chaoush to Zabetta; "you will answer the questions of this aga," pointing to Trompetta, "and you will speak the truth, the clean truth. Do you hear?—this is no play. We are here upon the service of your Lord and Sovereign the Sultan—have you understood me?"

Zabetta made a sort of nervous movement, and willingly would she have been spared this scene, but said nothing.

"Now write," said the dragoman to the scribe, "whatever you will hear." Then addressing himself to Zabetta, whilst Wortley

was at his elbow to prompt him, he inquired of her, "Are you acquainted with a Frank—an Englishman of the name of Osmond—Lord Osmond?"

She could scarcely utter, so thoroughly did her senses appear to be confused.

"Do you hear, woman!" said the Chaoush, in a voice of authority. "Why do you not answer?"

"Answer, mother," whispered Ayesha, whose whole soul was wrapped up in the proceeding.

The question having again been put to her, she answered, "Did you inquire about Osman Aga, the Frank?—yes, I know him."

"Relate how you became acquainted with him?" said the dragoman.

Zabetta made several essays to begin her narrative, but, finding herself unable to proceed, she fairly burst into tears, through excess of agitation.

"Wait a little," said Wortley to Trompetta; "allow the poor woman time to recollect herself, for she appears greatly distressed;"

whilst his eyes were fixed alternately upon her and upon Ayesha, with an expression which seemed to say how much he desired that their veils did not form an impediment to the gratification of his curiosity.

"Speak!" said the Chaoush; "we are impatient!"

Having a little recovered herself, Zabetta then proceeded, through sobs and sighs, and innumerable pauses, to give an account of her first acquaintance with Osmond, occasionally prompted by Ayesha, and set right by Mustafa. She gave a tolerably clear account of Osmond's adventures until his leaving Kars through the intervention of Hassan; but when she came to narrate that which related to Cara Bey, she became confused, and her account was so full of hesitation that it was difficult to be understood.

Mustafa, however, who was greatly alive to the whole scene, did not allow her memory to fail her, but constantly plied her with such pertinent questions, that, little by little, the whole story was elicited.

"So then," said the dragoman, "you were made slaves by Cara Bey? How then does it happen that you swore Lord Osmond brought you to Constantinople as his slaves?"

"What can I say?" said Zabetta, in evident confusion.

"Write this down," said Wortley to the scribe. "You see what falsehoods have been invented."

"Now tell us," said the dragoman, "where is this Cara Bey? You must occasionally see him; where is he?"

"What can I say?" said Zabetta in still greater confusion. "We are poor women, and new to Stamboul. We put our trust in Allah!"

"I can tell you!" exclaimed Ayesha with great animation, opening her lips for the first time; "he is to be found with the Capitan Pasha; and, if ye have the souls of men, let us intreat you to save us from his presence."

These words, spoken with an accent which went to the heart, and which sounded throughout the whole frame of Wortley like the reverberations of his own feelings—as if they be-

longed to his very existence, produced such an effect upon her auditors, that there was a tacit pause in the whole proceeding, and silence ensued for some minutes.

"Signor Trompetta, we must discover this man wherever he may be," said Wortley with intense interest, looking towards Ayesha as he spoke, and smiling at her with a glance of approbation.

"Now ask the woman," said Wortley to the dragoman, "whether that young person is her daughter: it is one of Lord Osmond's requests that we should investigate this matter."

"This is Mr. Wortley, the friend of Lord Osmond," said the dragoman to Zabetta, "and he wishes to know whether that maiden is your daughter."

At these words, Zabetta became entirely and completely overpowered; she seemed all at once to be struck by some unaccountable affliction, as if her whole frame was paralysed. She shook from head to foot. Ayesha became alarmed at her state, and endeavoured to soothe her, and give her courage to answer. She

seemed afraid to look up; there was such a total loss of mind for some minutes, that every one present was convinced that something more was connected with this question than met the eye. At length, as if gathering her senses, and making a sort of desperate effort upon herself, she exclaimed, "She is my daughter! What do you want more?"

"Have you been ever acquainted with English people before?" inquired the dragoman, at the instigation of Wortley.

This answer called forth another struggle, and after some moments of hesitation she said, "No! how should I? I am a Turkish woman."

"You were once a Greek," said Mustafa, "that you know; and you attended the Greek church in the Russian camp in Georgia. What words do you speak? We know things."

"If you were a man," exclaimed Zabetta, her anger roused, "I would answer you. What is it to you who and what I am? Look to your saddle and your post-horses, and leave honest folks alone. If you come here to insult

us, let me tell you we are not without our protector. We have a shade to sit under. Although you may shake your elbow at me, I can throw my five fingers at you." And thus she would have continued to run on in idle vituperation, for, when once roused, her passions and her tongue knew no control, had not Wortley broken up the meeting, by saying to Signor Trompetta and to the attendant officer,

"We have learned all that is necessary for our purpose, and as it is not our intention to produce a scene of contention, let us depart."

Upon this they took their leave, and proceeded straightway to the Reis Effendi, in order to give him an account of what had taken place; whilst Zabetta and Ayesha were left each to their different speculations, as to what might prove the result of this unexpected visit. Contrary to her usual custom after the departure of a visitor, whose merits or demerits, according to the rules of gossips, she freely discussed, Zabetta remained absorbed in thought. Something of more than ordinary interest had struck her mind, and seemed to

have paralysed her tongue. She did not even by sign, gesture, or exclamation, exhibit to her daughter what might be passing in her mind. There she sat in a corner of the room, sullen and dejected; the only symptom of her being alive was an occasional deep-drawn sigh, which involuntarily caused her breast to heave; and one who knew her might have supposed that she had been suddenly struck by some invisible spell. Ayesha, on the contrary, had been greatly relieved from her apprehensions concerning Cara Bey, and his patron the Capitan Pasha, by the appearance of the persons whom she had just seen, and particularly by that of Wortley. She now felt that Osmond had not been totally abandoned to the malignity of his enemies. The investigation which had just taken place, taught her to hope that there was no fear for his safety, and that, with the exception of the miseries of delay, he might hope to be released from his present bondage. In Wortley she had seen her lover's friend; after the lover himself, one invested with that character is generally the most interesting and the most beloved; and

during his stay her eyes had been riveted on his features under a degree of fascination for which she could not account. She felt that she loved him, and still nothing told her that that love was unpermitted. What would she not have given to have been allowed to open her whole soul to him concerning Osmond, to learn from him all the intelligence which he might have received relating to his fate, and to communicate all her hopes, her expectations, and those innumerable nothings, which, to those not in love, seem foolishness, but to those who are, become matters of serious and weighty import? Different from her mother, she would now have expressed her feelings by words, had she met with any encouragement. She observed how much her mother's conduct was changed by this visit, and remarked her silence and abstractedness with astonishment. She waited some time before she ventured to open her lips, but at length the desire to give vent to her spirits prevailed, and she exclaimed, "Mother, did you ever see anything so charming as that young Frank? I wonder if all the English are like him!"

To this Zabetta gave no answer.

"I wonder if they ever have beards like our Osmanlies! He had none, not even a mustache."

Still Zabetta said nothing.

"His hair was the colour of mine; and then, he has such expressive eyes!"

"Hold your tongue," said her mother in a peevish accent; "are you mad, child? How dare you look at a man? what are his eyes to you?"

"Nothing," said Ayesha—"that is true; but, as I have never seen much of Franks, I could not help looking at him. Besides, he is Osman Aga's friend, and I felt that he would protect us from that odious Cara Bey."

Zabetta still maintained her reserve, and only seemed vexed by Ayesha's observations. The maiden remained silent, and turning away her head, she opened the window and looked at the confined view before her. As she cast her eyes along the path leading by the rope-walk, she observed two grave Turks of respectable appearance, who, with slow and solemn gait, were making their way towards her, every now

and then stopping and looking about them, their eyes directed towards the row of houses in which she lived, as if in search of some specific house. As they approached, the maiden first uttered a slight exclamation, as she looked intensely upon one of them. "Allah, can it be!" she said; then again, "By the Prophet! it must be." In a moment after she cried out to Zabetta, "Mother, mother, it is — it is he! — come here, *bak*— see."

"Who?" said Zabetta, sullenly; "are you out of your senses?"

"As you love Allah," exclaimed Ayesha, "it is my father — it is Suleiman Aga himself! and there is the Mufti with him." Upon which she thrust her head and hand out of the window, and, unable to restrain her feelings, exclaimed, whilst she waved her hand, "*Babam* — my father, *bourda* — here, *gel* — come."

The well-known sound of her voice caught the ear of the old man, for it was indeed Suleiman Aga; and straightway, scarcely altering his pace, he stepped up to the door with his companion and knocked. Zabetta, at this dis-

covery made by her daughter, was suddenly and effectually roused from her previously abstracted state, and, having ascertained that it was her very husband himself, she was thrown into the greatest agitation. When anything unusual happened to discompose her mind, either sudden joy or sudden grief, she generally gave vent to her feelings in her mother-tongue. On this occasion, upon seeing the well-known heavy caouk bound round with white muslin, the thick grizzled beard, the round shoulders, and the phlegmatic bearing of her husband, she exclaimed to herself, "*Na to ne o kakomeros*—there he is, the miserable wretch! where shall I go now? May the evil one take him! The man who said, 'Welcome, Misfortune, if you come alone!' has spoken truth." She said this in a sort of bewildered state, half-conscious, half-demented, without making a step towards the door to receive her husband; and when she saw Ayesha rushing from the room for that purpose, she stopped her with violence, and would have prevented her.

"What are you doing?" she angrily cried.

"It is my father;" said the maiden, "shall we not admit him? It is Suleiman Aga."

The knocking at the door was repeated; still the wicked woman remained in a state of hesitation, more alarmed than the wretch who fears the presence of an injured benefactor, or a just creditor. At length both mother and daughter, the one resisting and the other urging his entrance, were released from their suspense by hearing the door open, the maid having transgressed her orders on this occasion; and soon after the heavy step of one ascending the staircase was distinguished. Ayesha would no longer be restrained, but rushed out to greet her father. The old man had just reached the head of the stairs, when his daughter met him. She seized his hand and the hem of his sleeve, to kiss it, as children are wont to do in Turkey, whilst he kissed the top of her head, and said, "*Alhemdullilah!*—praise be to heaven! Well found, O my eyes! where is your mother?"

Ayesha conducted him into the room, where Zabetta stood a picture of defeated intrigue and indecision.

"It is you, is it?" said she, with bitterness of heart and accent.

"It is I," answered Suleiman, "what do you want more? *Khosh bûldûk*—well met!"

A dead silence ensued. She could scarcely believe her eyes, as she looked at him from whom it had been the daily wish of her few last years to escape; whilst he, who was but little apt to indulge in much feeling, was struck by the coldness and repugnant manner of her reception.

"We are come," said he, (for Turks speaking in courtesy use the plural number,) "to look after the rascal who invaded our city and carried off our women; and our fate, Mashallah! has been to find you. Our friend the Mufti has shown us the way to your dwelling, and, please heaven! he will aid us in detecting the wretch, whoever may be his protector. May Heaven pour misfortunes over their heads!"

"If you expect me to return to Kars," said Zabetta, "you are mistaken. You can't put daylight into a bottle. We have got our

Stamboul, praises be to the Prophet! and so no more of your Kars." Saying this she shook the hem of her vest, and her head at the same time.

"Look ye, Zabetta," said the solemn Suleiman with much determination in his manner. "You know me. I am a straight-forward man. My words are *yok* — no, *belli* — yes. Whatever has happened has happened. So be it. Allah is great, and man cannot oppose his decrees. The spoiler came, seized, ran off, and was successful. We were without help, and our house was ruined — be it so! God be thanked for all things. All has been communicated to me from beginning to end. I will not look back; I look forward. This is Constantinople, and justice is open to every one — if you choose to return with me, well—no more need be said; if not, open your eyes. You know me."

"Are you come all this way," said Zabetta, "to make us sick? If you have protectors—so have we. You are not a man, if you look only to your own pleasure. Where is the place

we are now in, and where that which we have left! One is paradise, the other jehanum. I go not hence—this I have said, and never will I say otherwise."

"*Sen bilirsen*, — you know best," said Suleiman, rising from his seat with a determined manner, as if bent upon putting into practice some preconcerted scheme. "I am a quiet man, and want but little; but I am a Mussulman, and, as Allah is great! whatever is just that will I do—so look to yourself."

Zabetta, in this state of perplexity, was deprived of that active spirit of rebellion to all his wishes which she could so well exercise as long as her conduct in other respects was irreproachable. In her own harem at Kars she felt that she could throw her five fingers into her husband's face, and say "*Nah!*" with impunity; but to live out of his house, an alien from his protection, and to reject him as a husband, she knew was more than she could venture to do, if she valued her life. She felt it necessary, therefore, to smother her violence for the present, in order that she might

have time to concert measures for ridding herself of his presence. When he arose to depart, she opposed herself to this step, and adopting a conciliatory tone, of which she was the complete mistress, she seemed to take interest in his welfare; made inquiries upon what had happened since she had left Kars, endeavoured to make him feel the miseries which she and Ayesha had endured, and finally coincided with him in the view he took of Cara Bey's atrocities, and of the necessity of bringing him, if possible, to punishment. This, in great measure, softened him towards her; and the enjoyment of his never-failing chibouque, with an accompanying cup of hot coffee, presented to him by Ayesha's fair hands, succeeded in restoring his naturally placid temper to its usual composure.

Adopting this specious conduct, she made a show of cheerfulness in meeting her husband's wishes; but bitterness sat at the bottom of her heart, like a snake coiled up, only waiting a fit opportunity to emit its venom. She well knew how entirely a Turkish

woman is in the power of her husband if he chooses to exercise it; she felt that, with a man of the law at his elbow, Suleiman Aga, aided by the Mufti, might insist upon her obedience, and that there was nothing to prevent his treating her with every sort of cruelty. At the same time she hoped that the charms of her daughter might already have produced their proper effect upon the Capitan Pasha; and that, whilst she brought that part of her scheme to a happy conclusion through the agency of Cara Bey, she might also effectually get rid of her husband. She, therefore, did all she could to overcome the violence which the presence of her husband had excited in her breast; and whilst she made a fair display of good intentions towards him, busying herself in the duties of the house, and adopting that appearance of bustle and loquaciousness so common to her, yet her mind did not for a moment cease to revert to her situation, and to spin the never-ending web of her thousand resolves. Her great object for the present was to get her husband to leave the house,

in order that she might run to seek an interview with Cara Bey.

"We hear that the Padishah is to hold a great meeting of archery at the Ok Meidan to-day," said she, as she passed her husband, with a coffee-pot in her hand, which she had been cleansing; "why don't you go?"

"*Bakalum*—we will see!" said the passive Suleiman; "there is time for all things!"

Having once taken root in a corner of the sofa with a pipe in his mouth, he was not so easily dislodged. "I will first bring my effects from the *khan*, or inn," said he; "and then, *Inshallah!*—please God! we will see."

This was exactly what Zabetta did not desire. She dreaded his establishing himself in the house, for that would effectually deprive her of liberty, and put a stop to her schemes. "This is not our house, Suleiman Aga," said she; "we are here only for a day. You cannot come here."

"Houses are plenty in Constantinople," said he; "we will procure another."

"Had you not better go to the Mufti of

Kars?" answered Zabetta, throwing out a hint; "he is a man of understanding and knows things. Rogues abound here, and, before you make engagements, you must make use of other people's eyes as well as your own. You are a good man, that is true; but, Mashallah! you can no more make a bargain than I can take the Sultan by the beard. Come, go; the noon-day prayers are over, and he will have left the mosque."

"*Yavash, yavash!* — slowly, slow!" said Suleiman Aga, as he knocked out the ashes of his pipe, and fumbled into the recesses of his tobacco-bag, in order to replenish it. "Bring me some fire, Ayesha, my eyes!" said he to his daughter, who, since she had seen her father, felt more security and peace than she had enjoyed for a long time. As she placed a bit of live charcoal on the top of the well-tufted tobacco, which she did with the alacrity of affection, Zabetta turned her head towards them, with a frown of malignity and hatred upon her features, which seemed to say, 'Curses on you both! I will have my revenge!'

In this manner did Suleiman keep the ardent Zabetta in a state of irritation, until she was almost ready to burst with impatience at his dogged tenacity on the sofa — he seemed positively glued to his seat. At length the evening prayer was announced from all the surrounding minarets, when, as he was ever a devout son of the true faith, he thought it time to rise; and having duly washed himself, according to the most scrupulous forms, he sallied forth to make his devotions in one of the principal mosques.

No sooner had he left the house, than Zabetta was heard to sigh forth an audible '*Alhemdullilah* — praises be to Allah!' from the bottom of her heart; and straightway seeking her veil, without saying whither she was going, she took the path across the adjoining burying-ground, leading to the Capitan Pasha's palace, with the intention of seeking an interview with Cara Bey.

CHAPTER IX.

And the King loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins.

Esther, ch. ii. v. 17.

ABOUT the time of this our history, it was a report universally believed at Constantinople, that the present dynasty of the Ottoman Emperors was in danger of becoming extinct for want of an heir to the throne. There was not an old woman in the capital, nor along both the shores of the Bosphorus, who did not speculate, and wonder, and express surprise at what would happen for want of a chief, should Sultan Mahmoud, young as he then was, die without progeny. Some thought, should this calamity prevail, that it would be

necessary to have recourse to the Tatars, and from among their tribes find one whose descent from the original stock of the Seljuks was undoubted, and thus revive the exhausted tree. Others apprehended that an old prophecy, often referred to, namely, that the seat of empire would, in the course of time, be transferred from the shores of Europe to Damascus, was about to be accomplished; but all were unanimous in laying the imputation of the evil at the doors of the dames of the seraglio, who were condemned, one and all, as unworthy of the proud distinction of being the associates of royalty. There were as many wise heads among them for discovering an infallible method how to meet this national misfortune, as there are among ourselves ingenious contrivers how to destroy the evil of the national debt. Every mother hoped that her daughter might be the fortunate person who was to revive the expiring hopes of the nation; and every father speculated whether in his tribe the germ of a future monarch

might not still lie dormant, awaiting only the fortunate hour to fructify.

As soon as the Capitan Pasha had obtained a sight of Ayesha, his hopes almost amounted to a certainty that he had at length seen the individual upon whom this glory and distinction was about to devolve. Such purity, such appearance of health, such dazzling beauty, he never had seen, nor ever had imagined could exist among the daughters of men; and he congratulated himself that, through his means, his sovereign would become possessed of one who would realize every idea which he might have formed of the perfections necessary for a favourite sultana. He had been so smitten by her charms, her manner, and, more than all, by the superiority of her mind over everything in the shape of woman which he had seen before, that love would have prevailed over him, had not ambition maintained its ascendancy. He dwelt with complacency upon the increased honours and powers which would not fail to be heaped upon him:

already feeling himself, in fact, the ruler of the empire, he fondly imagined that, whilst the Sultan would be enthralled by the fascinations of his sultana, the lives and destinies of his subjects would be entrusted to himself. He determined without delay to seek a private audience, and disclose to his royal master the discovery which it had been his lot to make; and he made no doubt that, ere many revolutions of the sun, the lovely Ayesha would be installed supreme in her ascendancy in the seraglio, whilst his diminishing influence would at once be restored to its former greatness, only preparatory to still greater elevation.

Leaving him to put into practice this fond scheme of ambition, we must return to the irate and disconcerted Cara Bey. At the conclusion of the scene which had taken place in Ayesha's apartment, and upon his return with his patron to his palace, he felt, by the manner and mode in which he was spoken to and considered, that his sun for the present was set. His sensations were those of the rapa-

cious man who had divulged an important secret without having secured to himself any adequate compensation. Clenching his hands, he beat his head in agony at his own imbecility, and felt a disposition to wreak his vengeance upon every one but himself, for his own want of success. All his hopes of reward, honour, and distinction had merged in the person of the Capitan Pasha; he had freely made over his interest in the perfections of Ayesha to one who did not show the least inclination to be grateful, and who, to this moment, had made no acknowledgment for the great benefit which it seemed probable he had received.

He felt that his plans had been ill-laid, and, such as they were, that they had been disconcerted by a young and inexperienced girl, who, by a few words, had exhibited him as a liar, and had turned the trap which he had laid to enslave her into an instrument of mischief against himself. The only feeling in his mind which could in the least mitigate his mortification, was the reflection that he had destroyed

Osmond so effectually, that there was no chance of his appearing against him. Apprehensions he certainly had, if it were known that he was existing in a state of prosperity at Constantinople, that, among his numerous enemies, some one might arise who would denounce him to the government; but he hoped, through the patronage of the Capitan Pasha, which he still enjoyed, that no harm could accrue to him, and that, if he managed his future conduct well, he might still rise to eminence, notwithstanding the enmity of Ayesha, and the imbecility of her impetuous mother.

Brooding over these reflections, seated in one of the small rooms of the Capitan Pasha's palace belonging to the attendant officers, he was found by Zabetta, when she called to see him in the evening of the day, the events of which we have before described. She could not in the palace indulge freely in the communications which she was about to make to him; she, therefore, invited him to follow her to the burial-ground, and there seating themselves each under a cypress-tree, near an ancient

tomb, like two birds of ill-omen, they began their conversation.

"What can you want with me?" said Cara Bey. "All my hopes are destroyed. We met in an evil hour."

"Well you say," said Zabetta, "the stars are turned against us. When I tell you what happened this morning, you will say something more than that the hour was evil when we met."

"What has happened?" exclaimed Cara Bey, always under the apprehension of something rising up in judgment against him.

"May misfortunes overtake them!" said Zabetta,—"the ill-born! The day had not long begun its career, before we were visited by a Frank, and several people from the Reis Effendi, headed by that little cur of a Tatar, Mustafa, for the purpose of making inquiries concerning the Frank—Osmond."

"What say you?" said Cara Bey in alarm; "did they enquire concerning me? did they assert that Osmond still exists? What did they say?"

Zabetta explained all that had taken place,

manifesting an unusual degree of bitterness in what she said, and expressing herself with much agitation, whilst she apparently endeavoured to gain courage for the future from the words and observations of her confidant and adviser. He evidently was much struck by her communications, and continued to meditate in silence, contracting his brow, and occasionally rubbing his broad forehead with his hand.

She feared to increase his irritation by communicating what she conceived would prove a still more unwelcome piece of news; but, when she informed him of the arrival of Suleiman Aga, to her surprise, after a moment's reflection, he appeared pleased. He immediately felt that this circumstance would throw an impediment in the way of the Capitan Pasha's obtaining easy possession of Ayesha. However great may be the despotism of men in power, still he was aware that a true believer could not at once, by a blow, be deprived of his wife and daughter; and he hoped that there would, in some manner or other,

again be occasion for his interference. He felt quite certain that the Capitan Pasha was now so thoroughly interested in securing the possession of Ayesha, that he would go to any lengths in getting rid of Suleiman Aga; but, whilst he knew that there would be but little difficulty in securing this, considering the great means which he had at command, he still felt that Ayesha's love for her father might be an impediment. But, whilst he pleased himself by taking this view of the case, he was struck by the possibility that his own safety might be endangered by the representations which he and the Mufti might make touching his invasion of their city.

"Did Suleiman Aga say anything concerning me?" said Cara Bey to Zabetta.

"What can I answer?" said Zabetta, not willing to excite her companion into anger. "He did say something."

"What did he say?" exclaimed the other, "speak—fear not."

"He said then," answered Zabetta, "that he was come to seek you out, and to bring you

to justice. The Mufti was upon the same errand."

"So," answered Cara Bey, in deep thought —"So be it. I will sell their fathers and mothers—they will bring their beards to a bad market."

They continued to converse until the shades of night had completely closed in upon them, and then separated, with this result to their deliberations, that Cara Bey should without delay secure the means, through his patron, of getting rid of Suleiman, and that until he succeeded, Zabetta should continue to treat her husband as if nothing had occurred. She was to behave to Ayesha in her usual manner, and to let him know should anything new take place. Upon this they separated.

The Capitan Pasha's interview with the Sultan had been eminently successful. He returned to his palace with his head touching the skies, his mind teeming with hopes of future elevation, and full of the scheme by which he was to place Ayesha in the possession of his lord and master. He had suc-

ceeded in exciting the Sultan's curiosity and raising his expectations; and, moreover, had impressed him with the necessity of preserving the strictest secrecy, since there seemed to be much mystery in her history, which, if brought to light, might throw impediments in the way of his wishes. He did not conceal from his royal master any part of her previous adventurous life; and thought it right to state to what extent Osmond was implicated in it, showing how he had been disposed of, and urging the expediency of throwing every impediment against the steps which the English Ambassador was taking to procure his freedom, and which would be productive of a delay, ultimately of little consequence, whilst it would procure to himself an undisturbed possession of the maiden. He proposed a plan by which the Sultan might obtain a sight of Ayesha previously to sending the Kizlar Aga, or chief superintendent of the seraglio, to lead her in state to her prescribed apartments; and he was pleased to find that all his proposals were accepted, and, moreover, that he was

lauded for the zeal which he had displayed in devising so agreeable a mode of administering to the pleasure and advantage of his royal master.

Cara Bey had watched with impatience the best opportunity for an audience of his patron; for he was anxious once more to make himself of importance, and to secure some share of the advantages likely to accrue from an event in which he had been the principal agent. The Capitan Pasha, who now wished to take all the credit of the discovery of Ayesha to himself, was, on the other hand, anxious to keep Cara Bey from his presence; to make him feel that he was to expect no other advantage from its result than the solitary one of being allowed to continue in his service; and to make him feel, moreover, so much dependence upon his power and protection, that he would not venture to take a step in opposition to it, lest it should bring with it his entire destruction. However, upon his request, Cara Bey was allowed to appear before him.

"*Ne oldou?* — what has happened?" said the Capitan Pasha, when he saw him.

Cara Bey, with all humility, and with as much eloquence as he could command, made a full communication of all he had heard from Zabetta; dwelling strongly upon the circumstance of her husband's appearance, and showing how great was the love of Ayesha for her father, and of her father for her. He urged that point as very likely to prevent the separation of father and daughter; since she seemed determined, let what might be the consequences, never to relinquish her love for the Frank, but rather to cling to her father for protection. He then recommended that Suleiman Aga should be immediately disposed of in such a manner as to remove all further difficulty on his account.

The Capitan Pasha, at this disclosure, was thrown into utter dismay; for he foresaw that it would materially interfere with the plan already concerted with his sovereign. Thinking awhile, he said, "*Aferin!* — well done! Cara Bey. You are a good servant — you

have spoken in good time. We shall be mindful of you. What is to be done?"

"My lord!" said Cara Bey, elated with the thanks he had just received; "your servant is less than the least: whatever you may order, that will he do. We must send Suleiman away from Constantinople this very day. He has a friend in the Mufti of Kars, who is a man much esteemed and respected by the Ullemah; and, if he be not prevented, may, with his assistance, destroy all our scheme. He will forthwith gain possession of his wife and daughter; then, who can venture to invade his harem?—none!—no, not even our lord and sovereign the Sultan, upon whom be blessings!"

"You say right," said the Capitan Pasha; when, after a pause, he drew a piece of paper from under a cushion, and writing a few words upon it with his own hand, he folded it up into a note, sealed it, and desired Cara Bey to carry it straight to his *kiayah*, or deputy, who would superintend its due execution.

Cara Bey, upon receiving the note, instead

of immediately departing, lingered with hesitation imprinted on his features; upon which the Capitan Pasha said, "Wherefore do you stay? What is it?"

"My lord," answered Cara Bey with much humility, "I am a poor man: except Allah and yourself, Cara Bey has no other protection in the world. You were pleased to express your approbation of my services. Your slave waits your orders!"

"*Pezevenk!*—wretch!" exclaimed the chief in a rage; "what abomination are you eating? Go and be abused! What sort of a dog are you? Go!"

Upon this, the disconcerted wretch left his presence, with all the fierce and unavailing wrath of a demon in his heart. "*Akh! akh!*" said he, beating his breast at the same time, as he proceeded slowly to execute his errand; "when will the day come, when I may shed blood and say 'Thank God for it!'" But then reflecting that, by securing the expulsion of Suleiman Aga, he had rid himself of an enemy, his irritation was in some measure

assuaged, and he straightway delivered the note, of which he was the bearer, to the active and efficient deputy of the naval chief.

The moon had now risen, and was glancing her mild beams athwart the dark and dismal gloom of the cypress-trees in the cemetery: there was a solemn stillness throughout the air; silence began to reign in the great city; and nothing was heard save, here and there, the distant chaunt of sailors preparing their bark for sea. Ayesha had taken post at the open window, expecting the return of her father; whilst Zabetta, who during the day had complained of indisposition, lay extended on the sofa, her thoughts full of ambition, anticipating the result of her various schemes. Upon looking out, Ayesha saw a person walking slowly towards her, whom she recognised to be her father. He was alone, and had nearly reached the door, when, to her dismay, she saw suddenly rush from behind a projection of the opposite wall a gang of some five or six men, who ran up, seized him, and forcibly compelled him to accompany them. She was

so much frightened that, at first, she could only exercise her eyes, without being able to give vent to her fears by cries. Suleiman Aga scarcely made any resistance, so entirely was he overpowered. He looked towards his daughter, whilst she held out her hands to him. "*Babām!* — my father! father! where are you going? Here we are!" she exclaimed, crying and sobbing out his name, "stop, as you love Allah! Whither are you taking him?" These words, uttered in a piteous accent, brought Zabetta to the window. She scarcely exhibited any feeling, but, on the contrary, used her best endeavours to suppress that of her daughter, who, seeing that her appeal was unheeded, now uttered the most piercing and heart-rending cries.

Instead of endeavouring to soothe her by kindness, the wicked woman, on the contrary, upbraided her in harsh and violent words, and shutting the window, in order to prevent her cries being heard, seemed determined to harden her heart against any soft emotion. There was a sort of dogged satisfaction in her

manner, which beamed through her hard and perverse nature, and which formed a strong contrast with the soft and compassionate bearing of her daughter.—" Wherefore do they take him from us?" said Ayesha. " What has he done? This place is full of bad men; let us run to save him." Upon saying which, she would have left the house, in pursuit of her father's persecutors; but Zabetta interposed with violence, and said, " It is nothing, he will soon return — this is Constantinople. Here is a padishah, who dares to interpose against his authority? We are women, what can we do?"

A long interval elapsed, during which Ayesha, oppressed and overpowered by the events which had taken place during the day, retreated to a corner of the room, and gave way to her grief, full of despondency at her apparently hopeless situation, and of dismal forebodings at what might be her future fate. She saw in her mother one who, being opposed to her in every feeling, was evidently scheming to attain her own ends, entirely heedless of

her happiness. Her father had been seized and carried away a prisoner from under her eyes, and her lover perhaps, ere this, had fallen a victim to the revenge of his enemy, the monster Cara Bey. She felt herself utterly deserted — her only trust was in the merciful providence of her Creator; and were it not for the constant resignation to his Almighty decrees, to which she had ever accustomed her mind to submit with faith and humility, she must have sunk under her misfortunes.

This eventful day in her existence was not destined to close without the intervention of another circumstance of importance. Zabetta, who had been roused by the event which we have just described, had again thrown herself on the sofa, complaining of a racking head-ache, and of other symptoms of illness. She spoke little, though every noise appeared to agitate her. She rejected every advance which Ayesha made to give her relief, and only required to be left to herself. When they were thinking of retiring for the night, which among Turks

is usually at an early hour, several knocks were heard at the door, so loud, and struck with such an appearance of authority, that both Zabetta and Ayesha started up in dismay, and for the moment, each forgetful of their different causes of misery, listened with attention. Again the door was assailed with more violence than before, when they rushed to the window to see who might be the intruders. They discerned several well-dressed Turks at the door, and at some distance two others standing aloof, in observation of the result.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" said Zabetta.

"Open quickly," said one of the men.

"There are none but women here," she said; "you have mistaken the house."

"Open, and fear not," answered the other. Upon this she descended, and having again made inquiries in a low voice, one of the men said, it was the Capitan Pasha; upon which, without farther delay, she opened the door. She then returned to her room, and imme-

diately busied herself in lighting such candles and lamps as she possessed, and setting her apartment in proper order for the reception of her magnificent guest. Ayesha stood by, so bewildered and alarmed at the whole proceeding that all she could do was to cover herself with her veil; and fearing that the other person might be Cara Bey, she determined to hide herself from his sight. She was about leaving the room, when she was stopped by the appearance of the Capitan Pasha, followed by his companion, whom she recognised not to be her so much dreaded persecutor. Zabetta then forced her to remain, and she found herself face to face with the visitors.

The man who accompanied the Capitan Pasha was of middle stature, about twenty-five years of age, wearing a peculiarly black and tufted beard, with arched brows that overshadowed eyes of great brilliancy and expression; his complexion was pale, and his aspect severe. There was considerable dignity in his whole deportment, and every look and gesture denoted one accustomed to command. He seated

himself without ceremony, taking the whole circumstance of the visit apparently upon himself; whilst the Capitan Pasha seemed to pay him the most unbounded adulation and attention. Ayesha kept herself in the back-ground as much as she was able. She retreated to a corner of the room, closely covered with her veil; whilst Zabetta put herself forward in the most officious manner, making complimentary speeches without end, and asking how she might best render her services agreeable. The stranger took no notice of her, but kept his eyes steadily fixed upon Ayesha. He said nothing, but there was that in his appearance which made every one present uneasy, and full of undefined awe and apprehension. The Capitan Pasha stood, and said but little.

At length the stranger, looking at Ayesha with a smile, and addressing her, said, "*Korkma* — fear not; we are not come to do you harm — wherefore do you sit thus far from us?"

"I am a Mahomedan maiden," said Ayesha, fearlessly; "this is a harem, and if you are

men of the true faith, you must know that you sin in coming here. We want you not —we wish you to depart."

It was impossible to hear the beautiful and touching tones of Ayesha's voice without emotion, and coming, as they did, from under an impenetrable veil, the appeal to the imagination was irresistible.

"How came you here alone and unprotected?" said the stranger.

"Ah! we are strangers in this city," answered Ayesha, "and, moreover, we have been struck by misfortune. If you are men, these circumstances alone should prevent you from insulting us — we pray you to depart."

"What are your misfortunes?" said the stranger; "misfortunes may be averted when power is at hand."

"If power is at hand," exclaimed Ayesha, suddenly elated with hope, "and if you can command it, then may Allah shed blessings upon you, should you grant us your protection! This very evening, my father, our only support, has been taken from us — here, from under

our windows! Restore him to us, and we will ever be your devoted slaves!"

"What is the meaning of this?" said the stranger to the Capitan Pasha; "has the maiden a father?"

The Capitan Pasha, at this question, for which he was evidently unprepared, was struck with dismay. After a faltering explanation, he said, "I know nothing of this; we must investigate the matter."

The stranger was too much taken up with Ayesha to give great heed to this answer, and seemed only anxious to prolong the conversation. He led Ayesha on to converse, and every word she uttered, served only to make him anxious to hear more. She, at length, recollecting what was due to herself, and the impropriety, in her estimation, of this interview with unknown men, arose to leave the room, saying, "It is shame that ye linger here: were our Sultan to be aware of this indignity, he would protect us! What sort of government can his be, when a harem is not secure?"

"Stay!" said the stranger; "go not — I command you!"

"You command me!" exclaimed Ayesha with indignation;—"and who are you that can command?"

The Capitan Pasha seemed ill at ease, and would have seized her by her veil.

"Touch me not!" said Ayesha, with dignity.

"Touch her not!" said the stranger; "at your peril, touch her not!"

"May Allah bless you for this!" cried Ayesha with grateful emotion; "then, let me depart!"

"Stay, I command you!" said the stranger; "we can command you! — I am the Sultan!"

On hearing these words, Ayesha remained fixed in utter amazement; while Zabetta shook from head to foot with apprehension; — a dead silence ensued.

"Ayesha, fear not!" said the Sultan; "we have heard of your perfections, and are come to ascertain the truth with our own eyes. Capitan Pasha," said he to his officer, "you

may withdraw. We claim the privilege which no other man in our empire can claim."

The Capitan Pasha, making the lowest prostration, left the room with an attitude full of humility, when Ayesha, with a movement, in which the most exquisite grace was combined with the most unaffected modesty, drew her veil from her face, and discovered to the astonished and enraptured monarch those charms which were well calculated to enslave his heart.

"Too little has been said of you!" said the Sultan, as he gazed at her with undiminished admiration: "You are our's! By Allah! too little has been said. You are our's, Ayesha; by this, you become mine!" Upon which, he drew a costly ring from his finger, and, presenting it to her, said, "Take this as the token of your sovereign's love!"

Ayesha instantly knelt down before him; and, with an humility of action, and, at the same time, a decision of manner, which marked the energy of her character, said, "Let not my sovereign and master afflict his devoted slave, by making her do that which she can-

not. She asks to be restored to her father, and to live in that seclusion from the world and its dangers, for which only she is fit. She asks this as the greatest boon which her sovereign can bestow. She is totally unworthy of his notice — grandeur was not made for her enjoyment. Oh, leave her to her insignificancy ! she asks nothing more !"

This appeal, which only a thousandfold increased the rapture and admiration with which she had inspired the Sultan, was received by him as words without a meaning, as expressions flowing from a heart struck by awe at his presence. Zabetta, however, who knew her daughter better, who was acquainted with the secret of her heart and the resolution of her character, when she heard her speech to the Sultan, would have stamped with rage, and choked the words in their exit, had she dared so to do. She made unavailing signs, and threw out hints by gesticulation, but they were unheeded by her daughter, who having risen and retired, she in her turn threw herself before her dreaded guest and said, "Let not

our lord and master give heed to the words of the maiden: she is a child, and knows not what she says. We are your slaves! we kiss the dust of your slippers! Our heads have touched the skies — do not heed her words. She has lived in the country all her life, and what can she know of the honour which has been done her? Let the shadow of your kindness be extended over us!"

These, and such like phrases, she continued to string together, until she was stopped by a look from the Sultan, who now having satisfied himself thoroughly of the truth of what had been reported to him, without more words turned about to leave the room, whilst drawing from his breast a purse of gold, he gave it to Zabetta, and straightway departed.

When the whole party had quitted the house, and the mother and daughter were left to themselves, Zabetta, in the fulness of her joy, which had sustained her amidst the increasing symptoms of her indisposition, ran up to Ayesha, and, embracing her with an appearance of affection quite unusual to her, said,

"*Mobarek!* — good fortune attend you! — Praise be to Allah! it has at length come to pass! You are a sultana, and I am your mother! What can we want more? Whatever may happen, we are now safe! Suleiman Aga may come; Cara Bey may come; — they cannot now molest us, seated as we are under the shadow of royalty. Well done, Ayesha! well done! You have performed your part to admiration!"

"Desist!" said Ayesha, "do not talk thus: you do not know your daughter. What I have said, I have said; the world may go round, our destinies may change, but the mind of Ayesha is fixed! The Sultan may enslave my person, but my life is my own. I never will belong to any one, be he who he may, but him to whom I have pledged my faith!"

She said these words with a fervour and earnestness that quite alarmed her mother, who, having lost the excitement caused by the presence of the Sultan, now so strongly felt the pressure of the illness which had overtaken her, that she could no longer combat

her daughter's feelings, but sank down in a state of great exhaustion. Ayesha, forgetting every grief of her own in her anxiety to contribute to her mother's comfort, gave herself up entirely to her; and, administering to her such refreshing cordials as she could command, with the help of the servant succeeded in putting her to bed upon that couch from which she was destined never more to rise.

CHAPTER X.

Taluno gia agonizzante e non più atto a ricevere alimento riceveva gli ultimi soccorsi o le consolazioni della religione.

I Promessi Sposi.

As soon as Wortley had paid the visit, described in a former chapter, to Zabetta and Ayesha, he turned his steps towards the dwelling of the Reis Effendi, accompanied by Signor Trompetta, and demanded an interview with that minister. He was so elated with the result of his visit, and with the success of his investigations, that he conceived there could no longer be any good reason for refusing to set his friend at liberty. Moreover, he had been so greatly interested by what he had seen of the lovely creature who had so much engaged

the attentions of Osmond, that he had received a new incentive to attempt his liberation, and longed to write to him a full and detailed account of everything that had taken place.

He was received by the Reis Effendi with his usual urbanity. Wortley was too anxious to bring the subject of his visit before him to allow much time to be spent in preliminary compliment; and as soon as he had made the usual affirmations that his *kief*, or spirits, were good, and that his day had begun under favourable auspices, he requested the dragoman to inform his excellency of the whole proceeding of their visit to the women, and its result.

Signor Trompetta then, in his very best Turkish, commenced an oration to the Reis Effendi, in which he gave a full detail of Osmond's adventures, from the time of his arrival at Kars, to the period of his seizure by the Bostangi Bashi: to which the minister seemed to give his undivided attention, never interrupting him but by such slight exclamations as these, "*Pek ayi*—very well! *hay, hay* —so, so! *tchok, tchok*—much, much! *ajaib*—

wonderful!" He wound up his eventful narration as follows:—"The result is, that our Osmond Aga is a British subject, and not a Mussulman; that he saved two women from slavery, instead of making them slaves; and that, consequently, he is entitled to every indemnification from the Turkish government for the miseries which he has endured by a false and unjust imprisonment."

Wortley looked significantly at the Reis Effendi as these words were said, suiting the action by a nod of confirmation: when the minister, after a moment's consideration, taking his pipe from his mouth, coolly said, "If your subjects will dress themselves up like ours, so that one cannot be distinguished from the other, is it our fault if mistakes happen? If a horse chooses to put on the skin and horns of a buffalo, whose fault is it but his own should he be driven to the slaughter-house, and have his throat cut, instead of being left free in the field? You ask too much."

Wortley, who had studied the Turkish forms of speech as much from duty as for amuse-

ment, told the dragoman to request his excellency not to throw cold-water upon a dish which was already dressed and ready to be eaten; but at once to agree, that an order should be issued for Osmond's release, and that an express Tatar should immediately depart with it for Rhodes.

The Reis Effendi smiled at the young negotiator's attempt at eastern figures of speech, and said, "*Pek ayi dostoum*—very well, my friend! May you live many years! and may you soon become an *elchi bey*—an ambassador! May your beard grow as plentifully as your wit!"

The minister having made this concession, expected the whole question would be allowed to rest; but Wortley continued the subject by saying, that it was not enough to relieve the innocent from oppression,—that it was necessary also to punish those who had been the unjust cause of oppression. "We hear," said he, addressing himself to the Reis Effendi through the dragoman, "that the cause of all this mischief to our friend and countryman, is a man whom it is a disgrace to any nation to num-

ber amongst its sons—one who has been branded as an outlaw, a worshipper of the evil spirit, and one unworthy of life. This monster is now in Constantinople; his name is Cara Bey, and he is a servant in the pay of the Capitan Pasha."

When these words had been duly interpreted, the grave Turk stroked down his beard and looked very serious. After some moments of cogitation, he turned towards Signor Trompetta and said, "*Terjuman Bey*—Mr. Dragoman, can one take two skins off one sheep? *Olmaz*—that is impossible!"

"How!" said Wortley with eagerness.

"What does your excellency mean?" said the dragoman.

"Have you not made the Grand Vizir less than the dust?" said the Reis Effendi, with more animation than he had hitherto shown; "and will you also attack our lord the Capitan Pasha? What proof is there that this Cara Bey has injured your countryman? We must have a fresh trial. We do not condemn our subjects without a hearing. It is unfair to kick an ass only on one side!"

Wortley felt that he was not strong enough in his proofs against Cara Bey to urge his complaint at present; and having satisfied himself with thus feeling the minister's pulse on the subject, he determined to let the matter drop until he should be better able to follow it up. He therefore took his leave, but not without making an exclamation common in the mouth of a Turk, "God grant that none of his faithful servants may fall into the hands of doctors or judges!" This coming from the lips of so young a man, much amused the Reis Effendi; they parted in very good-humour; and, whilst Wortley returned to the palace to give an account of his proceedings to the ambassador, the Turkish minister felt delighted that a subject so delicate, as interference with the servant of so great a personage as the Capitan Pasha, had been thus easily dropped.

As soon as Wortley had reported to the Ambassador the progress which he had made in procuring Osmond's release, and the promise which the Reis Effendi had given to forward an order to the authorities of Rhodes to that

effect, Mustafa was ordered to hold himself in immediate readiness for departure. Wortley then sat down and wrote the following letter :—

"At length, my dear Osmond, I am happy to be able to despatch Mustafa to you; and if we are to put faith in the promises of that old fox the Reis Effendi, he will take with him an order for your liberation from what, I fear, has been a miserable state of bondage.

"Ever since we heard of your seizure, and the reception of your letter, I have not ceased to deplore the miseries which you must have suffered, and I have taken no rest in my endeavours to alleviate them. The Ambassador has seconded me spiritedly, and has allowed me, armed with Trompetta's eloquence, to attack the wily Turk with a vigour that has brought on as speedy a capitulation as could be hoped for. Your great crime, it seems, has been, talking the Turkish language so perfectly that you could not be supposed to be anything but a true believer, looking like one, and bearing a name which was never given but to

the second in succession from the Prophet, and to those who chose to take his name. My dear friend, I expect to hear after this that you will be entirely cured of your Turcomania; that for the future you will return to Christian practices with undiminished satisfaction, and be happy to abjure a name which has brought with it imprisonment and suffering. Although I do not covet the discomforts which you have endured, yet on the other hand I must say that I do occasionally envy you your strange adventures; for how rare is it the lot of a traveller to be so blessed! No one is a hero now a-days. Everything is rendered so easy; the road to the top of the great pyramid is as open as the steps to the top of St. Paul's; and a jaunt up the Nile to Cairo, is made as agreeable as one up the river to Richmond. Let not your miseries, then, be esteemed as of no value; for, believe me, they will hereafter turn to pleasure and amusement, if not to yourself, at least to your friends. Mustafa has made me stare with his account of your hairbreadth 'scapes during your confinement in that fiend

Cara Bey's castle; although, were I to believe him, he was the knight and you the squire in that adventure. I have had a transient view of your dulcinea, and those brilliant eyes of hers, which beamed over the hem of her veil, are now before my imagination, whilst her silver-toned voice still thrills in my ears. I would with pleasure have followed your injunctions, and have taken her under my protection; but, my dear Osmond, recollect that I am no knight-errant, whatever you may be; and that in this land of harems, of jealousy and yatagans, one might as well break the seventh commandment without ruinous consequences, as attempt to hold converse with a Turkish maiden without some tragical result. The mother of your charmer, during my short visit to her, appeared to be nothing more or less than a skinfull of wickedness. I never saw anything which promised so much beauty as the daughter's eyes, and which possessed so indescribable a charm as her whole manner. Trompetta has brought me many a strange report from the Turkish world of

gossip concerning these ladies, which I will not repeat, fearing they might break your heart ; but of this be certain, that you have bought your freedom from the silken chains by which you were bound, at a cheap rate, by the iron chain of misery which has been inflicted upon you.

"You know the hopeless situation of this empire, which for the present is left without an heir, and which is likely to fall in reversion to some vagrant of a Tartar, who, seated on his rug in some corner of Cathai, is thinking more upon the means of getting a meal than of acquiring a throne. The Capitan Pasha, it is said, has cast his eyes on your blooming Turquessa as a fit subject to present to his sovereign ; who, poor man ! having a whole continent of women at his command, is still hoping for an heir. His character has not yet been defined. Some think him weak and frivolous, others look upon him as the sternest of Mahomedans—as one likely to revive the days of the Suleimans and the Othmans. He puts in practice the old custom of the

Caliphs, of going about in disguise; and it is said, knows more of the manners and habits of his subjects than any other individual in his capital. Probably he may one of these days turn this knowledge to account, considering how much there is to reform in the horrid abuses incidental to this form of government.

"We have not been able to make out a case against Cara Bey yet—the villain! Our eyes are upon him, and sooner or later be assured he will be brought to justice. He possesses, we hear, great influence over the Capitan Pasha.

"I say nothing of European news; the accompanying newspapers will disclose everything. I envy you the luxury of reading over your letters, of which I send you a cart-load. There has been some talk of my going home with despatches, but that joy, I fear, has evaporated. I dread to think that I am here for a long and indefinite period. Send us back Mustafa as soon as you can; let us hear of your welfare, and believe me, my dear Osmond,

"Ever faithfully yours,

"EDWARD WORTLEY.

"P.S. A young Russian officer, Ivanovitch by name, has just arrived at the Russian palace with despatches from the governor-general of Georgia. He brings, among other things, a complaint against this government for harbouring and giving countenance to the wretch Cara Bey, a branded outlaw; and, it is said, demands satisfaction for the injuries which he has inflicted upon the subjects of the Emperor. This is well. He tells me that he was your fellow-sufferer, and talks in raptures of you. He is to dine with us to-day. Never was man destined to be so pumped as he will be! Once more adieu."

Having prepared his letters, Wortley summoned Mustafa to his presence, in order to give him directions concerning his route. The Tatar appeared in his full travelling costume, having divested himself of the Janissary's dress which he wore when in attendance at the gate of the palace. His conical cap, with its yellow cloth cushion at the top, was on his head; his Tatar coat was fitted tightly to his

person, by means of the great girdle of shawl bound round his waist, in which were inserted a huge pair of pistols and a yatagan; his boots and heavy cloth stockings were on his feet, and his long whip stuck behind his back, exhibited a heavy thong pendant in winding folds.

"You are now to proceed with all haste," said Wortley, "to seek your old master, Lord Osmond, and to discover him wherever he may be. We suppose him to be at Rhodes; you will therefore go there first. You will take a boat for the scale of Menemen, then proceed to Smyrna, thence by Ephesus to Moglah, and so on to Marmorice on the coast of Caramania, where you will hire a vessel which will convey you to Rhodes."

"Upon my head be it!" said Mustafa, delighted with the prospect of the journey, and of once again seeing Osmond.

"We hear that there are some disturbances in the country of Elez Oglu," said Wortley, "and that there may be robbers on the road; but you are a wise man, and will use your own discretion."

"I will sell their fathers and mothers!" exclaimed Mustafa. "My mustache has not grown to this length," at the same time touching his scanty sprouts, "that I should not know how to deal with such rascals. Be you but well, and as for the rest, *Allah kerim!* —God is merciful!"

"Here then," said Wortley, "are the despatches for Lord Osmond, and here is a letter from this government to the governor of Rhodes, which will secure his liberation. Now take them; go, and God be with you!" Mustafa took possession of the papers, folded them up carefully in his handkerchief, and, making his selam, without further delay proceeded on his arduous journey.

Wortley felt like a man relieved from a heavy responsibility, as soon as he saw his back turned; and putting up a hearty prayer for his safety, and for the speedy emancipation of his friend, he was joyfully preparing to meet Ivanovitch at the table of the Ambassador, when his servant came in, and said that a Greek *papas*, or priest, apparently in haste,

requested to see him without delay. Wortley ordered him to be admitted, when a man whom he had never before seen stood before him.

"What may there be for your service?" said Wortley, who had given himself pains to acquire the modern Greek language, and spoke it with some fluency.

"*Effendi*—sir," said the priest; "may you live many years! I come from a sick and dying woman, who insists upon seeing you ere she leaves this world. She says that it is upon a business of the greatest consequence, and intreats you, as you are a faithful servant of Christ, not to delay a moment in hastening to her call."

"Do you know who she is?" said Wortley extremely surprised at this message, and doubtful as to the propriety of acceding to the request, without a reference to his chief.

"She is my sister, sir," said the priest; "I have ascertained her to be such by a miraculous and strange accident. She has been missing from her family for several years, having abandoned her own faith, and adopted the

Mahomedan. Terrors of conscience have visited her on her death-bed, and she sent for one of her own church to receive the avowal of her repentance and recantation, being determined to die in the faith in which she was born. As good-luck would have it, I was at hand, and went to her, and, in the dying and penitent Zabetta, I have found our long-lost sister. Hasten, sir, ere death closes her eyes, to receive her parting confessions, for her breast seems heavily laden with some important secret."

Wortley was immediately struck by the name and circumstances of the dying woman, and concluding that what she might have to communicate must relate to Osmond, and would probably be the means of elucidating more facts connected with his late adventures, did not for a moment hesitate to accompany the priest; and they left the palace together.

During the whole of the night after the Sultan's visit, the disorder which had manifested itself in the wretched Zabetta, had been gradually developed, and in the morning it

was without hesitation pronounced to be the plague. The fatal and well-known symptoms were too decidedly evinced, to leave her state a matter of doubt; and all the horrors of speedy and inevitable death stared her in the face. Ayesha had entreated the servant-maid to seek out the first doctor whom she could find; and as she was a Turkish woman, and not in the least conversant with Franks, she straightway brought the only one of the sort whom she knew, namely, an aged and decrepid Jewess, who practised an art, if such it might be called, which every old woman might practise just as well as herself. However, her knowledge was sufficient to distinguish the plague at the first glance: which having done, cautioning the disconsolate Ayesha against its deadly contagion, she took her leave, and never more returned. Little, however, did the heroic maiden heed the caution, although she well knew to what danger she was exposing herself.

Strengthening her resolution and fortitude by mental prayer, she zealously applied her-

self with the most unwearied attention to give relief to her mother; and as she contemplated the great probability of her speedy death, and thought upon the state of her mind, which, devoted to ambition and worldly views, never seemed to have turned to the awful event about to take her from this world, she determined to apprise her of her imminent danger. She approached her with caution, and seating herself by her bed-side, as she took her hand between her own, said: "Mother, dearest mother! are you aware that the Jewish woman has seen you?"

"Has she?" said Zabetta, her eyes lighting up with animation. "What says she? Shall I soon be cured?"

Ayesha held her peace for some time, and as her eyes filled with tears, shook her head, and said: "God be merciful to his miserable creatures! The issues of life and death are in his hands. What can we do but submit?"

"What say you?" said her mother. "Submit! Surely we must submit; but why submit when the time is not yet come? Am I not

at Constantinople? Are not you a sultana? Are not we both the Sultan's slaves?"

"Speak not thus, O my mother!" said Ayesha, her heart bursting with grief at hearing such sentiments from one who she felt was condemned to death. "What is this world but a precipice on which we all stand, and from which, from hour to hour, we each in our turn are certain of falling down! Mother! do not despond; but, as I am your faithful friend and daughter, I must repeat to you what the Jewess disclosed to me—that your disorder is the plague, and——"

"*Ahi!* the plague!" exclaimed Zabetta with a thrilling scream. "What do you say, Ayesha? Oh, God!" Upon which she fell inanimate on her pillow, and presently her whole frame seemed convulsed with the last throes of death.

Ayesha applied her best energies to restore her to animation. She rubbed her hands, chafed her temples, poured a cordial into her mouth, and at length succeeded in her endeavours. But what pen can hope to describe the

agonised state of the unfortunate woman when she returned to a consciousness of her real and perilous situation! Her expressive face, now livid and ghastly; the mouth drawn down, the lips blue, her eyes bright with excess of fever, her brow overspread with wild and dishevelled hair,—all wore a cast of such despair and mad excitement, that the most frantic of lunatics could scarcely be compared to her, as she sat in tortures, both of mind and body, on this her last couch.

Ayesha did all she could to compose her, but with scarcely any effect. Her mind wandered from worldly ambition to the fears of future punishment. All the torments promised to the wicked, both by the doctrines of Mahomet and the denunciations of the Christian Gospel, were arrayed before her mind at one and the same time. She knew not where to turn for comfort. She felt herself culpable in her conduct towards Ayesha, yet still at one moment she would recede from her with horror, whilst at another she implored her pity and pardon in terms the most penitent, and even

abject. At length, as if struck by some sudden thought, a horrid smile broke out upon her demented face; and she cried out, "Ayesha, as you love me, as you forgive me, let me see one of my own religion! — let me see a priest! Send for one immediately! he will teach me how to pray to the Holy Virgin! She alone can save me! What else is there left for a poor sinner? He will guide me! He will receive my confessions!"

Ayesha, too happy to have any means pointed out to her by which she might give relief to her unfortunate mother, immediately determined to go herself in search of a priest of the Greek church; and although she was not at all versed in the ways of Constantinople, still she resolved to do this rather than entrust the undertaking to the discretion of her servant. Wrapping herself up in her veil, and leaving her mother under the care of the woman, she sallied forth, and soon found her way to a Greek church and convent, situated not far from the limits of the cemetery. By the assistance of a Greek woman, whom she

had met on the road and had enlisted in her cause, she gained access to a priest, and relating her story, persuaded him to accompany her, more by the eloquence of her voice and manner, than by any impulse of duty on the part of the priest; for Greeks are always backward in interfering with any concerns in which Mahomedans are involved.

The priest, the moment he entered the room which Zabetta occupied, would have retreated when he perceived her state; for he soon discovered that she might have the plague; but to his surprise, as soon as she had fixed her eyes upon him, she exclaimed, "Micheli! is it you?" The astonished man was struck with awe at what he supposed to be a supernatural intervention, for his name was really Micheli; but when he heard her once again pronounce his name, call him brother, and add, "Do you not remember your sister Zabetta?" he came forward, and in her, in truth, discovered a long-lost sister.

Zabetta, for a while, forgot her danger in the pleasure of having found a brother and

a comforter at a moment when she most wanted him; and the excitement had given her such animation, that she could fain hope that her danger was not imminent, and that she might still overcome it. Ayesha left the room to enable them freely to discuss their mutual concerns, and to afford her mother an opportunity to disburthen her whole heart. She began herself almost to hope that a crisis might take place in the disorder, such as she had heard described as sometimes occurring, and that recovery might ensue; in consequence, perhaps, of the sudden revulsion which had been caused by her meeting with her brother. But such was not Zabetta's destiny. After a short interval had elapsed, Ayesha was surprised to see the priest rush hastily out of the room and leave the house; and when she returned to her mother's bedside, she found that a reaction from the former excitement had taken place, and that she had sunk into a state of almost entire exhaustion. She, however, appeared sensible of her daughter's presence, and taking her hand into her

own, kept it fast locked therein, whilst her lips moved respondent to the thoughts that were passing in her mind. Ayesha remained thus until she heard footsteps ascending the stairs, and, as soon as she found that it was the priest who had returned, accompanied by a Frank whom she recognised to be her lover's friend, she left the room, and remained in attendance, ready at the least call.

Micheli had brought with him the necessary materials for administering the last sacrament to his wretched sister, which he did whilst Wortley was in the room, who stood looking on, struck with horror at the whole scene, but, at the same time, little suspecting that he was incurring the danger of contagion. There she lay extended, almost without animation; her whole body overspread with infectious sores; her eye sunk; her mouth parched with fever; her look, one of approaching dissolution, though still full of consciousness. As soon as the sacrament had been administered to her, she beckoned to Wortley to approach; and he having obeyed, she made a

sign to her brother to leave the room, with which he complied. She then requested Wortley to kneel down, which having done, to his astonishment, the wretched woman, whom he thought to be on the very verge of dissolution, arose, and leaning her head on her hand, her breath, which at first had apparently forsaken her, again returned, and she spoke. With great pain, she uttered at first a few words, which to him were inaudible; but when he heard her pronounce Osmond's name, he was aware of the subject, and redoubled his attention. Little by little she became more animated; her sunken eye lighted up, and a small hectic colour came into her withered cheek, as one may sometimes see the passing verdure of a blasted field reddened by the rays of the setting sun. Evidently, what she had to say was of great consequence to the composure of her mind. She stopped to draw breath, and looked into Wortley's face, as if entreating for pardon and commiseration. She then said a few words which excited all his attention; and he drew in his breath, lest he might miss even a syllable

of what she had to unfold. She spoke again —his looks became intense with interest;— again she went on—a chilly damp bedewed his forehead;—he heard a slight agitation of the door; he turned round, and shook his hand, as if entreating not to be interrupted. Her eyes now shot out a bright, and, as it proved, a parting ray. She held out to him the locket which had so frequently been the object of Osmond's curiosity, and which she had held fast clenched in her hands. She would have said more; but her last words fell unintelligible on the ear. Wortley was so agitated that his senses appeared to be entirely suspended: he saw the poor woman dying;— he watched her looks—her eyes sunk—still there was life;—he watched again, for he would have heard more;—her limbs seemed to stiffen down—when, all at once, she uttered one long and plaintive moan, and he saw her a stiffened corpse before his eyes!

CHAPTER XI.

Laudabunt alii claram Rhodon.—HORACE.

IT is high time to return to our hero, whom, in a former chapter, we left on board a Turkish vessel with his faithful Stasso, numbered among a gang of rogues and convicts, the off-scourings of the metropolis, bound for Rhodes, to be deposited in the arsenal there, and there to be employed upon the public works. Rhodes, from the earliest days celebrated for the beauty of its climate, the offspring of Venus and Apollo, the delight of the gods, abounding in wealth, and mistress of the seas, is now a poor island belonging to the Turks, usually under the su-

perintendence of the Capitan Pasha, and at the time we write was converted into a place of exile for delinquent pashas. An arsenal had recently been formed in the port of the town, in which occasionally a man-of-war was constructed; and hither it was found necessary, when the bagnio at Constantinople was overcrowded with prisoners, to convey the supernumeraries.

Osmond's feelings, on finding himself mixed up with a gang of the most nefarious-looking villains that could be seen, may better be imagined than described. When he had reached the deck accompanied by Stasso, he looked about him almost with the same dismay that the wretch who is brought out for execution beholds the face of nature for the last time. He seemed to have bid adieu to the world, as the world had apparently bid adieu to him. Every feature which met his eyes wore the character of villany: the dark brow of the murderer, the squalid cheek of the libertine, the sunken eye and emaciated form of the broken-hearted spendthrift, and the rude and

clamorous bearing of the hardened ruffian—all in rotation, met his observation, and made his blood curdle at once with disgust and indignation. These wretches were admitted, by small numbers at a time, to work upon the deck, with fetters on their legs, looking like detachments from the infernal regions permitted to inhale the air on the earth's surface, and then doomed to return into the horrid depths of their dreaded abode. Osmond's whole appearance, his dress, his manners, so little like a criminal condemned to hard labour, spoke so much in his favour when he came on board, that although the captain of the caravella had been enjoined to treat him as a convict, yet by a little negotiation, in which money was the principal agent, he forbore to put his commands into rigorous execution. Moreover, as good luck would have it, Osmond discovered that the Turkish *yûzbashi*, or captain, who, with a small company of soldiers, had been put on board to guard the convicts, was the identical officer who had been a fellow-passenger with him on board the saique in his

voyage in the Black Sea; and this man, recollecting with gratitude that it was owing to Osmond's behaviour during the storm that he had been saved from a watery grave, not only treated him with great attention himself, but caused others to do so likewise. The captain of the caravella, who was no great proficient in navigation, felt a sort of security in possessing an Englishman on board, who had already proved himself an experienced sailor, and therefore did not fail to consult him whenever there was a likelihood of danger. The weather was fine and the wind fair, and nothing occurred during the passage which called forth the exercise of much seamanship. The exiled Pasha, with his attendants, occupied the cabin on the poop; and although he was looked upon as one destined in the usual course of things to lose his head, still he was treated with respect, and smoked his pipe in peace. Fellow-sufferers in adversity become easily acquainted, and Osmond and the exile were soon seen smoking their pipes together, each becoming the confidant of the other. The poor man's

misfortune proceeded from a cause so characteristic of the Turks, that Osmond could not help being interested as well as amused by his narrative. He found that his companion had originally been a slave-merchant trading to Egypt and Alexandria; that in the exercise of his calling he had made several successful voyages, navigating up and down the Nile as far as Cairo, backwards and forwards between Alexandria and Constantinople, without a reverse; and that, at length having realised considerable wealth, he became ambitious, and wished to advance himself at court. Having, as he conceived, acquired considerable experience at sea, he felt himself equal to take the command of a ship, and accordingly, by presents and adulation, making himself acceptable to the Capitan Pasha, he succeeded in being appointed to the command of one of the Sultan's frigates. He was sent to Alexandria upon public service, but, as he still had an eye to trade, could not resist taking advantage of his situation to buy a considerable quantity of slaves, which he took on board his

ship, and which, on his arrival at Constantinople, he disposed of to considerable profit; making presents of value at the same time to his chief, by way of propitiating him in case this abuse of his situation should ever be brought up against him; for he had taken the liberty to class his slaves among the ship's company, and appropriate their rations and allowance to himself. In a short time, he was made a Pasha of two tails, and appointed to command one of the Sultan's seventy-fours. Several of these fine ships were ordered to anchor off the palace of Beshiktash, there to await the Emperor's pleasure, becoming in the mean while the objects of his daily admiration. For his misfortune, one fine day, when a fresh breeze was blowing, the Sultan, surrounded by his court, seated in the great kiosk, situated near the Seraglio Point, was pleased to give an order that his ships should get under weigh, and manœuvre about before the palace, in order to afford him and the ladies of his harem the pleasure of seeing his fleet under sail.

As soon as this order was brought to Emin

Effendi, for that was the name of Osmond's companion, the poor man streamed at every pore from fear and apprehension, and taking his turban from his head, he threw it on the ground, exclaiming "*Amān! Amān!* — pity! pity! what fate was ever like mine! Here am I ordered to manœuvre, when it is as much as I have ever done to get my ship away without running ashore." However, there was no help for him, he did his best, he tried to make a display of skill; but in going about, the ship missed stays, fell on board another, ran aground, and at length was obliged to let go her anchor, with manifest tokens of confusion on board. His awkwardness was soon noticed by the Sultan, and his enemies were open-mouthed against him. His delinquencies were set forth, particularly that of selling part of his ship's company at the slave-market; and from that moment the devoted man incurred the Sultan's displeasure. He was ordered into exile, his fortune confiscated; and here he was at once an instance of defeated ambition and of the injustice of despotism. Notwithstand-

ing this reverse, such was the strength of his philosophy, that he sat smoking his pipe with the indifference of a stoic, whilst every rising sigh was quickly suppressed by an exclamation of "*Allah kerim der!*—God is merciful!" and by a shrug of the shoulders, accompanied by the word *kismet*—fate.

Osmond endeavoured to drive away all desponding thoughts from his mind upon the misery of his present situation, by interesting himself as much as possible in the extraordinary scenes, so characteristic of the people of Asia, which daily took place under his eyes. He felt that with patience his misery might be endured, for he knew that his cause was in good hands at Constantinople, and that in the course of time he should not fail to be relieved; but the great difficulty was to keep his thoughts from dwelling upon Ayesha. The whole history of his acquaintance with her now appeared to him as a dream; and when he considered what might be her present situation, and to what temptations she might be exposed, suspicious as he was of the intentions of her mother,

and of her association with Cara Bey, he became almost frantic with complicated emotions. He had no one to whom he might open his heart, but Stasso, who was himself so overpowered with despondency at the turn which their affairs had taken, that he could scarcely be induced to move from the spot upon which he had seated himself when he arrived on board.

There were many in the ship, however, infinitely more worthy of pity than either our hero or his valet. One morning, as Osmond was seated near his friend the Yûzbashi, smoking a soothing chibouque, and talking upon those nothings which make up a Turk's conversation, on a sudden they heard a great outcry, accompanied by a tumultuous gathering on the forecastle. It was occasioned by the attack of several Turks belonging to the crew, upon a miserable-looking Jew, one of the convicts, whose appearance of abject wretchedness was well calculated to call up every feeling of commiseration.

The Jew was an ugly, sallow, hopeless-look-

ing fellow, wearing his face bandaged up by a piece of rag, whilst the whole of his dress consisted of little else than a pair of blue trowsers and a blue shirt, his miserable starved limbs peeping through a succession of curiously situated holes. The words which he uttered, or rather mumbled, struck Osmond's ear as importing a story so strange, and at the same time so comical, that he could not help lending his whole attention to the scene.

"I am not a dentist, by my faith! I am no dentist," exclaimed the Jew.

"You are—you are," roared out the assailants. "Strike him! break his head! dog of a Jew, he is a dentist!"

"Here," said Osmond to himself, "here, in truth, is a *Médecin malgré lui.* Would that I were a Molière!" The noise still increasing, he rose from his seat, in order to lend his assistance to the unfortunate wretch who so emphatically disclaimed being a dentist.

"What has happened?" said Osmond.

"What has happened! do you ask?" said one. "Why, here is a *chifout*, a Jew—pig—

dog that he is, who is a tooth-drawer, and who asserts that he is not!"

"But, in the name of Allah, why strike him?" said Osmond. "Is it a crime not to be a dentist?"

"A Jew not to be what a Mahomedan wishes, not a crime! say you?" said another; "we will make mince-meat of his father. But he is a dentist. He refuses to pull out a tooth for our *Nostruomo*,"—so they called the chief officer.

Osmond was so much amused with the whole scene that he could scarcely refrain from unbounded laughter. "Stop, stay your hand, I will be your dentist," said he, wishing to release the unfortunate Israelite from what he apprehended might be his death, should he persist in denying his profession. This diversion in favour of the poor Jew proved effectual, for every one's attention was now directed towards Osmond, anxious to observe how he would extract a tooth which was racking the Nostruomo with pain. "Bring me a ball of twine," said he, with all the self-confidence of an experienced practitioner; then, recollecting a

story which he had read in some book of school-boy jests, he gravely went up to his patient, a coarse rough Algerine, and asking permission to inspect his aching tooth, ordered the twine to be tied round it, which having been done, was fastened, or, as the sailors would say, belayed to a gun. On a sudden, brandishing a yatagan, he made a feigned blow at his patient, who, as suddenly drawing back his head, extracted his own tooth in the neatest manner possible. This feat filled the Turks with surprise, and increased Osmond's reputation among them for sagacity and ingenuity. They looked upon him as a miracle of a man, and on all occasions he was called upon to decide in cases of difficulty. He took advantage of his ascendancy to protect the forlorn Jew, who, but for his help, must have become a prey to accumulated ill-treatment. The unfortunate wretch willingly told his story, which was as follows.

"He was, in truth, a tooth-drawer, and a leech, by profession. Having been called upon to draw a tooth for the Bostangi Bashi, unfortunately he extracted a sound instead of the

decayed one. Discovering his mistake, he secreted himself for several weeks, fearful of the vengeance which might be wreaked upon him, and when at length he ventured to leave his house, he always kept clear of the great thoroughfares, and skulked about at night-fall. Some six months had elapsed, when, hoping that all was forgotten, to his dismay, one day crossing the Bosphorus in a boat with a pair of oars, he saw the great barge of the Bostangi Bashi rowing towards him. He lay down in the bottom of the boat, occasionally turning his eye over the gunnel. To his horror the barge still followed, and, ere he could look round, it darted alongside; and immediately two men seized him, and dragged him before the dreaded comptroller of the Bosphorus in person. 'Dog of a Jew!' said he, 'do you think I have forgotten? look at this, shaking his tooth at him at the same time. I will pay you in your own coin. Here, men, draw out all this wretch's teeth.'—Upon which," added the Jew, "I was thrown upon my back, and a ruffian strong as a lion drew his dagger, and by thrusts, knocks,

and tugs, succeeded in pulling the few teeth—and God be praised that there were only a few!—out of my devoted head. He almost killed me in the attempt, and then, by way of hushing up his cruelty, conveyed me hither a prisoner, and a convict. What more can I say?" Lord Osmond consoled the unfortunate man as well as he was able, and he had the satisfaction of finding that through his influence he was no longer molested.

A short time after this event, the ship anchored in the harbour of Rhodes. Every one on board was anxious to see the place of his future abode, and the sides of the vessel were thronged with the motley groups of those who composed its passengers, eyeing with curiosity the numerous buildings which reared their heads in picturesque outlines around them. Osmond was surprised at the apparent strength of the place, the fortifications of which were evidently not of Turkish construction, and he was not long in discovering that they must date from the time when the island was the principal seat of the Knights of St. John

of Acre, who took possession of it in the year 1308. He thought he could trace the treble wall with which it had originally been fortified, strengthened by turrets. One very lofty tower was conspicuous among the rest, at the base of which several large guns peeped through their heavy embrasures. At the mouth of what he supposed must be the arsenal, he observed a sloop-of-war on the stocks, almost ready for launching; and here he was not slow in remarking the manner in which the convicts were intended to be employed, and what probably would be his own fate, should he not be fortunate enough to make interest with the authorities to prevent it.

In the course of the day the convicts were all landed. The Yûzbashi, whose office was now at an end, promised Osmond that he would immediately use his influence with the governor to obtain for him a dispensation from labour among the common herd; whilst his friend, the exiled Pasha, assured him that he would exert himself with the same view, and he hoped with success, since by good for-

tune the wife of the governor was his own sister.

The Arsenal was a sorry abode, surrounded by walls; at one end of it were open sheds secured by bars, and in these places at night the convicts were enclosed. The intervention of Osmond's friends proved successful, and, making a liberal use of such money as was left in his purse, he secured for himself and Stasso a small separate lodging, to which he might retire from the noise and turmoil of the convicts and their labours, and wait for the result of the interference of his friends at Constantinople in his favour. Days passed away: sometimes his spirits were not proof against despondency, and he would devote whole hours to solitary meditation, strengthening his mind by prayer, and turning his thoughts from the things of this world to those of eternity. At others, he would console himself with the hope that his release must be near at hand; and then he would converse with the unfortunate men his fellow-sufferers in confinement, and make them relate to him their

histories, and the causes which had led to their captivity. He had collected a sufficient number of anecdotes for as voluminous a record as the Newgate Calendar, relating to crimes worthy of the severest punishment; whilst at the same time, as in the history of the poor Jew, there appeared cases so trivial, that, evidently, private revenge, or capricious despotism, without any reference to justice, had alone been exercised. There was one case which was highly characteristic of the Turks. Osmond had observed among the convicts a young Turk, whose spirits seemed never to flag, who was foremost in work as well as in fun, and whose general appearance interested him in his favour. He made his acquaintance and learned his story, which was as follows.

"He was a *galiongi*, or sailor He had been pressed into the service of the fleet at Constantinople, and was allowed to wear arms, which is otherwise interdicted in the capital. Being short of money, he and a companion in the service devised this ingenious mode of acquiring some. Having bought a fat hen, they

went into the suburb of Galata, which is situated on uneven ground; and one standing at the top of a street, the other at the bottom, when a passenger went by, the man at the top of the street obliged him to buy the hen for a given price, and when he had got to the bottom, the other took it away from him by force: thus selling and stealing the hen by turns, they reaped an easy harvest. They had succeeded beyond their expectations on the first day, and determined to continue their speculation. On the next, having taken post as before, a slow and solemn Turk, looking like a merchant, was seen making towards them. The man at the top of the street immediately stopped him, and exclaimed, 'Here, friend, here is a fowl.'—'So be it,' said the merchant.—'You must buy it, in the name of Allah!'—'In the name of Allah! I will not.'—'You will not,' said the armed man, 'then we shall see.' Upon which, he drew his yatagan, and with his hand uplifted, said, 'Buy, or you die!'—'If such is the case,' said the merchant, not in the least discomposed, 'then I buy.'—

Upon which he paid his money, took the fowl in his hand, and walked down the hill. When he had reached the other rogue, he was again stopped. — To my surprise," said the narrator to Osmond, " I saw the merchant turn round and make a sign, as I thought, to me; but lo! a body of three or four men rushed down the hill, and seizing my companion, one of them drew his sword, and before the poor devil could look round, his head was cut off as clean as a pumpkin might be from its stalk. I immediately took to my heels, and ran for my life — the race was one of life or death, until I came to the sea, when I immediately plunged in, and saved myself by clambering up the side of a boat and rowing off. I found that the supposed merchant was the Sultan in person ; he had been informed of our trick, and had himself come in disguise to punish it. Orders were sent to the fleet to discover me — an offer of pardon was announced if I would give myself up — I did — here I am — What can I say more?"

Weeks had now elapsed, and still there was no appearance of relief. Couriers arrived to the governor, and no mention was ever made of Osmond. His money was now nearly expended; misery stared him in the face; he saw that he should shortly be doomed to the fate of a common malefactor, that he must enter among the ranks of the convicts, labour like them, eat their food, and make one of their filthy community. The comptroller of the arsenal had hitherto treated him with more leniency than he could have expected from a rude man accustomed to scenes of violence; to his sorrow he heard that another had been appointed to fill that office. The sloop-of-war which we have before mentioned, was now ready to be launched, and it was announced that, on the day appointed for this ceremony, the new comptroller was to be installed.

Few events disturb the dull monotony of a life at Rhodes; a launch, therefore, became one of importance. On the morning, the whole population was astir to see the sight. The governor of the city, with all the dignitaries,

had a place assigned to them. The walls, the towers, and the fortifications, were lined with people: the women conspicuous by their white veils, the men producing a pleasing variety by the brilliant colours of their dress. The moment had arrived. Expectation was alive; every eye was directed to the gallant vessel, covered with flags and filled with anxious passengers. A signal-gun was fired; the hammers were heard; she began to move; a murmur of delight ran through the assembled crowd; when lo, on a sudden she stuck in her progress. Apprehensions were now excited; the whole arsenal was in motion; a cry was heard to summon all the convicts. Every one ran to the spot; Osmond and Stasso were not spared, they were forced to lend their aid on the emergency. A hawser was immediately drawn from the launch to a capstan; the bars were fitted to it; they were manned by the convicts, and with shouts and cries unceasing, they began to heave with the intent of drawing back the ship to the spot whence it had started. Great was the labour, and little

the result. Every man applied his shoulder to the bar with his whole strength, not a muscle or a sinew was thrown away; still the exertion seemed useless. The comptroller, wishing to distinguish himself in his new situation, stopped the proceedings for a moment, and taking a heavy cudgel in hand, mounted the capstan; having seated himself thereupon, he ordered the heaving to begin again, and, by way of quickening the exertions of the convicts, did not cease to belabour their backs with his cudgel. He was a most solemn-looking personage — this new comptroller. Slow and deliberate in his motions, wearing a long grizzled beard, and covered with an ample cloak, whilst his head was fitted with a caouk of vast dimensions, his whole appearance, seated aloft on the summit of the capstan, surrounded by the hundreds of closely-packed heads of the convicts, might be compared to a huge weathercock, of which he was the vane, they the points of the compass. He uttered no other word than "*chek*," which answers to our "give way," after the repetition of which he let fall

an indiscriminate blow of the cudgel. Whenever the blow fell upon some prominent head above the rest, a shout of laughter was set up by the convicts, which did not in the least discompose the phlegmatic man, who, without let or hindrance, persevered in saying "chek," and administering his blow. Osmond, who was stationed the outermost at one of the bars, was at first greatly affected by finding himself placed in so degrading a situation; whilst Stasso, his neighbour, was perhaps more so. But after the first anguish had passed over, little by little he caught the prevailing spirit of hilarity, and the whole scene appeared to him so ludicrous, that he fairly laughed outright at his own thoughts.

He then turned his eyes up towards the principal cause of the merriment, and to his surprise, whom should he see but old Suleiman Aga of Kars, the supposed father of his Ayesha, and one of the principal causes of his misfortunes? He looked at him with anxious and curious scrutiny to satisfy himself that he was not mistaken, and the more he

gazed, the more his interest was excited; for there was the solemn man going round and round, saying "chek," and giving his blows, with the same doggedness that he exhibited in saying his prayers, or in performing any other act of every-day life. At length a decided stop was put to the whole proceeding; all the heaving in the world could not stir the vessel; the groaning capstan moved not an inch; all further efforts were in vain. Upon this Suleiman Aga stayed his hand, in order to hear the words of one of the principal officers, who recommended the hawser to be let go, in order that it might be tried in some other position. The convicts were ordered to crouch down, the words "let go" were given, when all at once, with the rapidity of the swiftest coach-wheel in motion, the capstan was left to its own evolution, and it went round, bearing Suleiman on its summit, with such excessive velocity, that all traces of the man were lost, and all that could be seen of him was an undefined lump, supported by two arms that were holding-on on either side. The shouts of merriment

that were set up by the convicts, on seeing their governor performing so extraordinary a caper, apparently in the air, were reverberated in echoes all round the shores of the harbour. So intense was the laughter which it produced, that the wretches absolutely rolled one over the other as they indulged in the spasmodic excitement; and indeed the contagion was such that the whole town of Rhodes might at one time have been said to be afflicted with a horse-laugh. When the capstan at length came to a full stop, the circumstance proved anything but a source of merriment to poor Suleiman. He appeared more dead than alive; he was sick at stomach; his face was pale; his beard was utterly discomposed; he was obliged to be lifted off his perch; and his services as a comptroller for some days were rendered useless by the unceasing sickness with which he was visited.

Osmond determined to make himself known to Suleiman, and to break through the prejudices and customs of the Turks, which prevent inquiries concerning their women, by asking

him whether he was acquainted with the fate of his wife and daughter. Upon the first opportunity he accosted him, and told him who he was. The old man, for the first time in his life, almost started when he saw him. He could scarcely believe his eyes; but as he was unhappy himself, he easily shook off the first feeling of disgust upon seeing one who in truth was the origin of his misfortunes, and communicated freely with him, seeing that he also was a companion in adversity. Osmond began by soothing his mind, and showing him that, but for Cara Bey, who had so forcibly invaded his house, he would never have become a prey to such accumulated misery. He gave him a detailed exposure of his adventures since the day when he had fled from Kars, showing him how destiny, and not any preconcerted plan, had made him the protector of his wife and daughter; and exposed in its fullest light the infamy of Cara Bey's proceedings. He dwelt strongly upon the doubts which had been raised in his mind concerning Ayesha's parentage, attributing to those doubts the

great interest which he had been led to take in her fate.

Whilst he was making these observations, Osmond observed that the old man looked very much disturbed; and as he conceived that through him some discovery might be made, he pressed him so hard with questions, that at length he seemed on the point of making a confession. He, however, waved the subject, and skreened himself from farther importunity, by relating all that had happened to himself, how and in what manner he had recently met Zabetta and Ayesha, and described the violent and abrupt manner in which he had been torn from them at Constantinople.

Osmond listened to his narrative with breathless attention; for in Suleiman he saw one who gave him as recent intelligence as could be attained of her whom he held dearer than life. There was no end to his questions; and as he endeavoured to connect the course of events, he plainly saw that she was still under the influence of the intrigues of Cara Bey and her mother, and his heart smote him with the

fearful apprehension lest, excepting indeed by some miraculous intervention, his adored and unfortunate Ayesha should fall a prey to their infernal machinations. He returned to his confinement with such an accumulated load of despondency weighing upon his spirits, that his life became indifferent to him, and he would willingly have laid it down, but for that high and invigorating feeling of resignation to the decrees of the Almighty, which never left him, and which, upon great emergencies, always brought with it rest and peace, and every other blessing attendant upon a good conscience.

CHAPTER XII.

The thousand shapeless things all driven
In cloud and flame athwart the heaven
By that tremendous blast.

The Siege of Corinth.

OSMOND'S situation had now become so hopeless and wretched, that, in order to keep soul and body together, he felt he must submit to the fare and fate of a common convict. His money was entirely gone; little by little he had sold his arms, his clothes, his watch, and every valuable which he possessed; his faithful Stasso had done the same, and without some one to whom they could have recourse, it was plain that they must either eat the black bread of the convict, or starve.

They had slept their last sleep in the small

hired apartment, and on the following day it was determined that they were to take up their abode in the sheds, when, to their infinite surprise, they were visited by Suleiman Aga, accompanied by several dignified-looking Turks, servants of the governor of the city, who approached Osmond with every mark of respect, and announced to him, on the part of their master, that he was free: an express Tatar, they affirmed, had just arrived from the Porte with the news, and they were ordered to conduct him forthwith to the presence of the governor. Whoever has watched the countenance of a sick friend when told all at once that he is out of danger; or has observed a prisoner when about to die he receives his reprieve, may perhaps form some idea of the delight which broke out in the heart of Osmond on hearing the announcement of his deliverance. His first impression was that of unbounded gratitude for the kindness of Providence so manifested in his favour, and he offered a mental prayer expressive of his feelings. The effect upon poor Stasso was quite different;

from a downcast, broken-hearted man, he burst forth into all the exhilaration of a merry madman. He began to talk faster than any Greek had ever talked; he could scarcely refrain from clasping his master in his arms. He straightway hurried to busy himself in his usual manner, to pack up and arrange, to fold and unfold, not recollecting that there was nothing left either to pack or to arrange. No other words were heard to issue from his mouth than, "May the fiend take Cara Bey! I will break his head, God willing! May anathemas fall upon him!"

It was soon rumoured throughout the arsenal that the Frank was about to leave it. Osmond had proved himself the friend of the prisoners, by doing all in his power to alleviate their miseries; occasionally giving them money, helping them in sickness, and soothing their minds in distress. When he was about leaving its walls, they formed a lane for him to walk through, and he received their expressions of regret, made after the Asiatic manner, by assurances on his part of the interest which he

should ever take in their welfare. As he stopped to speak a few words of consolation to the poor tooth-drawer, (the Jew,) telling him that he would do his utmost to procure his freedom, he suddenly encountered a pair of eyes beaming upon him with peculiar expression, the eyes of one whom he had not before remarked among the convicts, which were immediately averted, but which he felt were familiar to him. He thought no more of this circumstance at the moment, but proceeded on his road to the governor's, where he arrived, attended with all the respect due to a man of consequence.

The governor of Rhodes was a dignified Turk, bland and courteous in his manners, and of a generous and liberal spirit. When Osmond entered the room, he rose from his seat, insisted upon his taking the place of honour, and treated him with more attention and civility than are commonly shown to Europeans. After the usual compliments were over, the governor said, "Our emperor has ordered us to express his regret at the unworthy treat-

ment which unintentionally you have received in his country. I am prepared to make you, Osman Aga, every reparation which you may demand. Money, clothes, a vessel to bear you away if you require it, are at your disposal. We ask nothing of you, but that you agree to forgive the past, and that you acknowledge yourself satisfied with my treatment of you to the British Ambassador at our Sublime Porte."

What could our hero do but make his ready acknowledgments for a proceeding so straightforward? His first impulse was immediately to return to Constantinople, in the hope of being able to regain possession of Ayesha. With the certainty before him of proving that she was not a Mahomedan born, he hoped, in defiance of every difficulty, to withdraw her from the protection of Zabetta, and in time to claim her as his own. In the mean while, delight at this happy change in his fortunes drove from his mind his many past miseries, and he repeated his acknowledgments to the governor for his kind offers; who on his part did not rest until he had fully put in practice every

profession which he had made, lodging him in his house, fitting him out with clothes, and giving him such money as he might require. An Austrian vessel was on the very point of sailing for Trieste, and by her the governor urged Osmond to take his departure, and in a manner so pressing that it was evident he had strong reasons for so doing. When Osmond, however, manifested no desire to accede to his wishes, but talked of an immediate return to the capital, the governor, dismissing every one from his presence, in confidential terms showed Osmond that there was an imperious necessity that he should not return; hinting, indeed, that he had received strict orders to prevent such a step; and recommended him, as he valued his life, not to attempt it. Osmond took fire at this interdiction, which he termed an infraction of the friendship between the two countries, since, the subjects of Turkey having free egress and ingress from and into England, with liberty of travelling about whithersoever they might please, those of England ought to enjoy the same privileges in

Turkey." — "My friend," said the polite Turk, "that is true; you say right; but there is an exception in your case, and such an exception as cannot be overcome."

"What can be the exception?" said Osmond with some warmth: "I have done no harm."

"I have been enjoined not to mention it," said the governor, "unless I see a positive necessity. Know then, that the maiden whom you seek (for your history is not unknown to me) claims our sovereign lord the Sultan as her master and protector. You are aware of the strictness of our laws concerning women, and of the sacred nature of our harems; and you must also be aware that the Sultan would never willingly allow of your approach to a spot where your appearance might produce mischief. Do not persist upon going to Constantinople, either by land or sea. By land, I must prevent your going; and should you return by sea, you will be taken from the ship by force upon your arrival there, and made to submit to the penalty of being a rival to the Sultan."

This information cast a gloom of despair

over the mind of our hero. He now saw that Ayesha was lost to him for ever. What could he do but submit to the orders of the governor? In vain he devised schemes for evading them; his whole conduct was now strictly watched, and he had no resource left but to embark in the prescribed ship. Instead of that alacrity and happiness which he had at first experienced, his whole manner was changed, and he became mournful and pensive. He seemed to be left without an object in the world.

The day before his embarkation, he determined once more to visit the arsenal, in order to take leave of the convicts, his former companions in misery, and to administer to their several wants, by making them a donation in money; a liberality which he could now exercise, since, owing to the interference of the governor, he had been able to negotiate bills with a merchant at Rhodes upon his banker at Constantinople. Followed by Stasso, and accompanied by Suleiman, he entered the walls of that dreary abode, at a time when all the gang were at work. By Suleiman's orders, their

labours were suspended, and they were called together to attend in a body. Osmond's heart smote him with commiseration when he saw so much misery, and when he compared the state of the poor wretches who stood before him with his own free position. They hailed him with delight; they were permitted to gather round him; and as he distributed money to each, he received the expression of their gratitude with feelings well becoming one of his excellence of heart and liberality of sentiment. He again promised to interest himself in favour of those who had been unjustly imprisoned. All the squalid, wretched, and care-worn faces, for a moment seemed divested of their misery, and were clothed in smiles. The young Turkish thief exclaimed "*Allah esmarladek!*" The poor Jew kissed his hand, others were pressing around to bid him adieu, when on a sudden, an uplifted arm, brandishing a short dagger, was seen to raise itself in the crowd, and anon fell with a quick and violent blow upon the breast of the unsuspecting Osmond. He was almost beaten down with its violence. He staggered,

but was not hurt; for most providentially a thick sketch-book, which he always wore in the breast-pocket of his beniche, intervened, and warded off the blow, which, but for that circumstance, must have proved fatal. Stasso's quick eye had seen the action, and no sooner was the blow struck than the murderer's arm was fast clenched in his grasp. A terrible struggle ensued. A yell of indignation burst from the assembled crowd. The murderer would have fled; Stasso still held on with inevitable strength; and having at length mastered him, he threw him down on the ground, whilst at the same time he wrenched the weapon from his hand. All were eager to see who the villain might be. He turned his face to the ground, anxious to conceal it. He was a strong, broad-shouldered man, wearing a thick and ample beard, and dressed as a sailor.

"Who is it?" roared out old Suleiman, firing up into animation uncommon to him.

"It is the Devil!" said Stasso between his teeth, as he kept struggling on the ground,

and dealing some awfully-sounding blows upon the head and temples of the culprit. As soon, however, as he had caught a glimpse of his eye, he roared out, "Did not I say so? — it is he! —it is Cara Bey the Yezidi!" And there, true enough, lay extended this man-fiend! He had disguised himself by allowing his beard to grow, but his eyes no one could mistake who had ever seen them.

"It cannot be," said Osmond, who, having recovered from the blow, now stood forward and looked down upon him. "How came the villain here?"

"You say it is not he, O Effendi!" exclaimed Stasso; "then look at this!" Upon which he drew up his turban and large red skullcap, which were drawn down tightly as low as the eyebrows; and there the print of the horse-shoe was seen, almost as fresh as if it had been stamped but the day before.

"If you want to see your real enemy, Suleiman Aga," said Osmond, addressing himself to the old Turk, "there he is. This is Cara Bey; look at him!"

Suleiman Aga opened all his eyes, and exclaimed with reverential gravity, "*La illaha illallah!* — there is but one Allah!" and then added, "Dog without faith!" All the convicts, in turn, came and spat upon him, some saying, "Dog!" others, by way of taunt, "*Lahnet be shaitan!*—Curse upon Satan!" others, "*Pezevenk!*" and "*Giaour!*"

The murderer, having been caught in his own toil, remained absorbed in dogged and moody silence; he eyed Osmond with the looks of a wild animal deprived of its prey. With his arms strongly pinioned behind his back, he was dragged forcibly on towards the house of the governor, whither Suleiman Aga invited Osmond to follow him, whilst, occasionally looking at the prisoner, he mumbled to himself, "As Allah is great! I think that fellow came hither in the same ship with me. Great are God's works!"

The whole party reached the governor's house, followed by an immense crowd: Osmond was invited to be seated; Suleiman Aga

also took his place on the sofa, and the culprit was placed before the governor, divested of his turban, his hair streaming wildly about his ears, whilst the horse-shoe scar stood revealed in the strongest manner. When the whole murderous proceeding had been related to the governor, he turned to Osmond, and said, "What can I say for my countrymen? We have bad men among us,—that you know, to your cost; but I hope you will also acknowledge that there are some good. I at least will do my duty; and, therefore, I place this wicked man's ear in your hand: do what you like with him — pound him in a mortar; impale him; bake him in an oven; bowstring him; or simply cut his head off; only speak the word, and it shall be done. We are Mussulmans, and the servants of the Prophet!"

Stasso, who was standing near the prisoner, every now and then giving his arms an extra twist with his bonds, looked as if he would have preferred the adoption at one and the

same time of all the different modes of killing proposed by the governor, so great was the impulse of revenge which raged in his heart.

Osmond answered, "Sir Governor, may your shadow never be less! I will not deprive your law of its victim. Whatever your law ordains, that do. This wretch is too wicked to live: I do not oppose his death, however much I abhor bloodshed. I am now about to leave your country, perhaps for ever; therefore, were he even permitted to live, we never more might meet again. But as the same evil passion which has impelled him to seek my life, may be exercised against the life of another, I repeat that, in justice to the public good, I ought not to oppose, and I do not oppose myself to his death. I leave him entirely in your hands."

"But what do I see?" said the governor, as he turned his eyes towards Cara Bey; "that mark on your forehead, villain, pronounces your fate, whatever else might interpose to prevent it." Then referring to his scribe, he inquired whether orders had not been trans-

mitted from Constantinople, to keep an eye upon one of the convicts, whose forehead was branded with a horse-shoe, and, should he be found transgressing, instantly to put him to death. Such were, in fact, the orders received; and such was the wicked man's doom.

The governor, after again condoling with Osmond for the constant ill-treatment which he seemed destined to receive as long as he remained in the country, would have congratulated him upon the prospect of his speedy departure, had he not observed how ill those congratulations would be received; and they then separated.

The next morning being fixed upon for Osmond's departure, he was escorted with all due ceremony to the water's edge by the governor and his officers. Upon taking an affectionate leave of that personage, he delivered to him a letter expressive of his entire satisfaction with the treatment which he had received at his hands, to be forwarded to the ambassador at Constantinople, although he did not conceal that he complained of the restraint which had

been put upon his person. A boat from the ship was in readiness to convey him on board; Suleiman Aga accompanied him. Osmond was about taking leave of him also, when the grave man, with more feeling than he had ever before exhibited towards him, took him aside and said, "Osman Aga, God is great, and sees into the hearts of men! If I have ever done you harm, forgive me. I have only one word more to say;" and then, evidently with a severe mental struggle, he added, "The maiden is not my daughter — nor is she Zabetta's: more I cannot say, for more I know not. And now Allah protect you!"

Osmond was so struck by this piece of intelligence that he would have detained his informant; but he turned away, and walked with a hurried step from him. To have delayed longer, he saw was impossible; stepping, therefore, into the boat, in another second he found himself on board. Seated on the poop, deeply pondering over what he had just heard, and his eye glancing over the scenery of the harbour, his attention was fixed

by the appearance of several men in the embrasure of one of the large guns situated at the foot of the high tower, apparently preparing to fire it: he saw the charge of powder first rammed down, then a ball introduced, and, last of all, he perceived a man with his arms pinioned behind his back, brought forward and placed before its muzzle. With a spy-glass, he soon discovered the intent of the whole proceeding. The prisoner was Cara Bey! There was no mistaking him: pale and haggard, he stood with his face outwards, apparently already more than half dead, awaiting the dreadful termination of his wicked life.

The governor had evidently intended this scene as, in his mind, the best mode of doing honour to Osmond. It was certainly an original mode, and indeed one purely Turkish, of showing 'a piece of delicate attention.' The poor wretch, with outstretched hands, seemed to implore the forgiveness of the departing vessel. He had so often been on the point of death and still had been permitted to live, that, flattering himself with the hope of escaping on this

occasion, he had remained arrogant and confident to the last; but now he felt that all hope had vanished, and, becoming proportionably abject, his cries were audibly heard. As his eyes looked towards the harbour, he could perceive Osmond on the deck of the ship: he entreated, he implored. There never was, in the whole catalogue of crimes and punishments, an execution more awful in its termination, and so striking in all its circumstances, both as forming a great moral lesson, and an exhibition worthy of being recorded by the painter's art.

The ship had already weighed anchor; the topsails began to fill; she was slowly beginning to glide out of the harbour, when suddenly the gun was fired, a flash was seen, an immense explosion took place, the murderer was launched into eternity, and his miserable remains scattered unto the four winds of heaven!

A sensation of awe ran through every heart, as the echoes of the shock reverberated throughout the harbour. A shout of mingled pity and

execration came from the assembled convicts. The mangled pieces of the wretched man's body fell here and there in splashes in the sea, and attracted the birds of prey that hovered about the city. A dead silence ensued: those who were at work stopped to reflect; those who had assembled from curiosity walked thoughtfully away. The death of a fellow-creature must ever be a subject of deep and awful import to the survivors; and on this occasion, where the guilt was undoubted, the exercise of the power which punished was applauded, because its decrees were indisputably just.

The last emotions which filled the breast of our hero, as the ship left the island, and slowly turned towards the broad expanse of the sea, were deeply tinged with melancholy. That the last honours which he should receive from the hands of the Turks, as a sort of compensation for the miseries which he had endured at their hands, should have been a discharge of the whole person of his enemy almost into his very face, was a circumstance which struck

him with horror. At any other moment, (putting out of the question the odium of spilling human blood,) this act, so characteristic of a semi-barbarous nation, might have amused him; but now it inspired him with an undefinable feeling of gloom and dreariness, particularly as it was mixed up with the feeling that he was leaving his cherished Ayesha, who he now knew for certain was not a Turkish maiden born, to drag out her existence among a people to whom by birth she had never belonged. These thoughts entirely occupied his mind during his passage, almost to the exclusion of the joyful anticipation of seeing his country again, and being restored to his friends and relations.

Stasso, on the other hand, was all life, joy, and alacrity. When the catastrophe of Cara Bey's death had taken place, he was standing near his master, watching for the moment of seeing the villain receive the death so long his due, with a sort of credulous anxiety, as doubting whether it were in the power of man ever to compass the destruction of

one whom he really thought to be the evil spirit in person. When the gun at length was fired, and he saw the extinction of the poor wretch, between wonder and excitement he could scarcely draw breath; at last, when he could speak, he exclaimed, "Well! God be thanked! I really thought it had been the devil — God be thanked!

The passage was prosperous. A steady breeze carried the ship in succession along the shores of Candia; then, skirting Cerigo, she made the coast of the Morea, steered close by Cephalonia and Corfu, and, running up the Adriatic with a strong easterly wind, cast anchor in the harbour of Trieste, the tenth day after her departure from Rhodes. The morning after, she warped into the lazaretto, where Osmond was installed in the possession of certain rooms, to perform the prescribed quarantine.

Who that has ever returned to Europe after having passed a long time among Asiatics, does not enjoy exquisite delight at the transition, feeling that he returns to take his place in the

civilized world, after having been exposed to the vicissitudes and vexations of an intercourse with semi-barbarians! Although Osmond felt this in a high degree, for, in setting foot on shore at Trieste, he was in fact almost restored to his family, still the image of Ayesha, which was ever before his eyes, seemed to reproach him that he had not attempted to return to her, and that, in quitting Turkey without at least ascertaining what had been her fate, he had forsaken and abandoned her to hopeless misery. But he consoled himself by the reflection that he was obliged to cede to necessity; and he could not dismiss from his mind a lurking hope that she was not lost to him for ever. He determined that he would leave no stone unturned to discover who might be her parents, and, should he be so fortunate as to ascertain that fact, insist that, whether she might be a captive within the Sultan's seraglio or a free woman elsewhere, she should be restored to them.

He heard of ships sailing almost daily from

Trieste to the Levant, and was seriously contemplating a return to Constantinople ere he proceeded to England, in spite of the governor of Rhodes' denunciation, when he was visited by the English Consul, who, although without news of consequence to communicate, still had it in his power to dissipate much of the ennui of quarantine, by sending him a long series of newspapers, which would give him a general history of the world since his seclusion from it. Osmond had so long been deprived of news from his own family, that his first object was to acquire some intelligence concerning them; and, as several members of it were persons in office, in parliament, and attached to the King's person, he expected to find mention made of them in some manner or other. One of the first paragraphs which met his eye was as follows:—

"We regret to announce that a noble family has been thrown into the deepest distress, owing to intelligence just received from Constantinople that its heir is supposed to have fallen a victim to Mahomedan jealousy. The young

and distinguished nobleman in question was known to have formed an *attachement de cœur* with a beautiful Turkish woman, and this entanglement is said to have led to the above-mentioned ever-to-be-regretted fatal *dénouement*."

He was almost choked with emotion as he read this. Loving his parents with the most ardent affection, he saw at once the misery into which they must have been plunged by his long absence. This circumstance put to flight all ideas of returning to Turkey: had he been at liberty, he would not have delayed a moment in proceeding to England with all haste, and he made instant application that the term of his quarantine might be abridged as much as possible. He resolved, first, to see his parents, and then, according to the intelligence which he might receive from Wortley, to return and seek his love.

Acting up to this resolution, as soon as the measure of his confinement was over, he purchased a carriage, and set off by the shortest route, having previously written a letter to

his father, announcing the probability of his speedy arrival.

Stasso, who had never been in Europe before, was in the seventh heaven at all he saw. The transition from the back of a lean post-horse to the cushions of a dicky-box, was one of unceasing delight; and although he had no means of making himself understood but by signs, still he seemed to comprehend everything almost intuitively.

Osmond travelled day and night in a straight line to England, and did not allow himself to take rest, even in the great towns. Stopping in the café of a small place in France, whilst his carriage was being repaired, he took up a French newspaper, and passing his eye over its columns, came to the following paragraph :—

"Selon les dernières nouvelles de Constantinople, il parait que la civilization y fait des progrès rapides. On nous assure qu'il s'y débite un roman, dans lequel le chef suprême de cette nation hautaine joue un rôle très marqué, et dont les détails piquans et intéressans fe-

raient honneur aux tems les plus chevalresques de notre belle France. Il parait que le Sultan est devenu amoureux en vrai troubadour. Parcourant les rues de sa capitale à la belle étoile, il vit une jeune et charmante personne à sa fénêtre, avec laquelle il eut un entretien des plus intéressans; de propos en propos l'entretien s'échauffe—le souverain amoureux veut se faire recevoir — la belle refuse — voilà des sermens, des vœux, qui sont écoutés favorablement: un enlèvement s'ensuit, et voilà notre Sultan le plus heureux des mortels. Le roman cependant ne finit pas là; car il parait que la belle était déjà promise à un jeune lord Anglais, qui l'avait enlevée à un voleur de grand chemin dans quelqu'endroit, à ce que l'on assure, entre l'Egypte et la Perse. Le Sultan, par droit de son caractère administratif, a fait décapiter le jeune lord, et par un espèce de coup-d'état s'est mis en possession légale d'une de ses sujettes, pendant qu'il expédie celui qui avait usurpé des droits qui n'étaient aucunement les siens. Le jeune lord, dit-on, s'appellait Lordosmon."

This paragraph, however full of absurdity

it might be, did not fail to produce a serious impression upon Osmond, and he now felt that all his hopes of ever possessing Ayesha were indeed totally, utterly blasted. His only desire was to reach England; he was rapidly approaching its shores, and at every step his heart beat in anxious anticipation of once again embracing his parents; in whose society he resolved he would endeavour to forget her who so long had held the first place in his thoughts and affections.

CHAPTER XIII.

AND CONCLUSION.

Lo mas dificultoso para la postre.

CEJUDO, *Refranes Castellanos.*

IT was early in the morning of one of the last days of September, when, descending one of the hills above Boulogne, Osmond caught the first view of the white cliffs of Dover:—his heart glowed at the sight, although the general tone of his feelings was full of melancholy. A few hours after, he crossed the channel; and as the day closed, he found himself safely landed, and in an hotel at Dover.

It was some time past midnight before Osmond could proceed on his journey. He had

in part preserved his Turkish costume, not having been able to renew his European attire; his appearance, therefore, which was a mixture of the Oriental and the European, both odd and original, was highly picturesque. His Tatar pelisse, the pendent sleeves of which hung behind after the fashion of the Hungarians, was fastened before by thick braiding and tassels, whilst it entirely enveloped his person; and instead of a hat, he wore a fur cap, which gave to his head an Asiatic character. Stasso also preserved his Oriental dress.

A little before noon his carriage stopped at his father's door, in Grosvenor Square. The town was a perfect desert, and the loneliness of the streets suited the mood of his mind. As he drove through them, he thanked his stars that he had arrived at the present moment; for he was in no wise prepared to meet the rush of friends, and those numerous inquiries which would have awaited him had he arrived when the town was full. The knock which the postilion gave at the door, resounded throughout the square in faint echoes, like the

ghost of the many thousand knocks which had been heard during the departed season. A noise of bolts undrawing and chains removing, and other symptoms of solitude, were heard ere the door was opened. Then, as it slowly turned upon its hinges, it discovered an astonished individual in the shape of a housemaid, who, half surprised, half in doubt, seemed to be thrown into a state of uncertainty as to the propriety of admitting such outlandish-looking people into the house. As soon, however, as she heard the questions put in quick and anxious succession, "How is my father? How is my mother? Where are they?" her muddy complexion reflected a variety of hues; and supposing there "might be some mistake," and that her young lord had not been dealt with so hardly by the foreigners as reported, she dropped her curtesies in rapid succession, and, opening shutters, which threw light upon broad gleams of dust, ushered Lord Osmond into his father's library. Having discharged the postboys, and finding his parents were at the family place in the country, he

ordered a fresh set of horses, being determined to continue his journey without a moment's delay.

Osmond scarcely asked a question beyond ascertaining the state of his parents' health: he looked over the house, feeling the approaches to their presence, as it were, by the inspection and touch of those objects of daily use which were seen throughout every room, and which reminded him of their habits and daily avocations.

Stasso eyed everything around him with astonishment; and when he had ascertained that he was in the paternal mansion of his lord and master, looked upon it with an interest which seemed to imply that he also was a sharer in its possession.

The horses were now at the door. Osmond got into the wayworn carriage, Stasso ascended his seat, and away they went, driving across the square, intending to make their way, through Upper-Grosvenor-street and the Park, to the high road. Osmond recollected that the house of Sir Edward Wortley, the father of

his friend at Constantinople, was the corner-house of the square ; and as the carriage drove along, naturally cast his eyes towards it. Instead of being closed like the others, every window and every shutter was open ; flowers and shrubs were disposed in profusion throughout the balconies ; a fat porter stood picking his teeth at the door, dressed in the gayest of liveries, and there was an appearance of habitation about the house which nobody could mistake. Osmond could not refrain from asking a few questions concerning the family, and particularly with respect to his friend. He ordered the postboys to stop, and alighting inquired whether Sir Edward Wortley was in town.

"Yes, Sir," said the porter, with a face beaming with contentment, as if he was happy to say 'yes.'

"Is there any late news from Mr. Wortley at Constantinople ?" said Osmond.

"Oh yes, Sir," said the porter, "there is."

"What news ?"

"Why, he is only here, that's all, sir," said the janitor, with a sort of happy chuckle that

evidently was intended to intimate more than it expressed.

"Is he indeed!" said Osmond in a rapture of delight. "Is he at home?"

"Yes, I believe he is, sir," said the porter; upon which he sent for the proper servant to show Osmond into the drawing-room.

There was such a marked expression of satisfaction in the faces of all the servants, that Osmond could not help feeling that Wortley's return must have caused it; and well it might, since his amiable qualities were calculated to attract universal regard. Osmond was introduced into the drawing-room, which bore the marks of having been recently occupied by Lady Wortley; for her writing-table was spread with letters and books, and work and every other accessory lay scattered around. He stood for some time looking about him, when, turning towards an open door which led into an adjoining room, his attention was caught with the reflection of a female head in a mirror which fronted him. It was not dressed according to the English fashion; he could not

well define how it was dressed. The face, which was partly concealed by a hand on which it reclined, was, by its position, looking downwards. He could have wished to see more of it; for what he did see was eminently beautiful: besides, the hand was fairer than any he had ever before beheld. The hair fell down in profusion, but in a manner new to his eye in Europe; still, somehow or other, it was not altogether strange to him. He gazed on for some minutes without daring to make the least noise. At length, tired of standing in one position, and impelled by curiosity, he advanced some steps towards the open door. The noise he made, caused the object of his attention to look up; and when the full face was disclosed to him, he started with an emotion almost amounting to terror. She, upon seeing him also reflected in the glass, suddenly stood up, trembled from head to foot, put her hand to her temple, and, uttering one long, thrilling, searching cry, fell down senseless on the floor.—In another second, Osmond was at the feet of his long-lost Ayesha!

Who can venture to describe what followed! Surprise was the feeling which principally filled the breast of Osmond, when first he saw before him one whom he firmly believed to be shut up within the walls of the seraglio. This was succeeded by such raptures of joy, love, and gratitude, that he was like one demented. In the excess of his joy he probably would have forgotten to alarm the house, or to seek help in the dilemma in which he was placed; but the cry which Ayesha uttered had reached the ear of her mother, who, without delay, rushed to her assistance. When Lady Wortley saw a man of Osmond's strange appearance standing over her daughter, she also uttered a loud cry, and at the same time rang the bell violently. Presently the room was filled with servants; a report ran through the house that Miss Wortley was dying, and a sensation of alarm set every one in motion. Sir Edward was called from his own room, and his son, soon hearing what had happened, also rushed to the drawing-room. No one could make out who Osmond was, or how he had got

there: some conceived that he was an evil-intentioned person, and had frightened Miss Wortley into fits; others thought he might be some Turkish Blue-Beard come to take her away;—but the moment Wortley appeared, throwing himself into the arms of his friend, he pronounced his name, and the whole mystery was cleared up.

Slowly the astonished and bewildered Ayesha (for we must still call her by that name) came to herself; but it was only to swoon away again, so great had been the concentrated shock of joy and surprise. She was removed to her bed, and every restorative having been resorted to, and Osmond being no longer before her eyes, she gradually recovered. It was then that the history of his return was cautiously disclosed; and when she was really assured of her happiness, her whole being seemed to dissolve itself in tears of joy and gratitude.

Never was there such a scene of unmixed delight as that which took place between the lovers. As it defies the power of description—for what words can ever paint the eloquence of lovers'

looks and lovers' sighs?—we must for the present leave them to themselves. In the meanwhile we will endeavour to afford those explanations to the reader, which he may, or possibly may not, wish to seek at our hands.

Sir Edward Wortley in early life had devoted himself so intensely to the study of classical literature, and particularly of Greek, that it became his ruling passion. His first wish was to visit Athens, to reside in Greece, and to collect everything that could throw a light upon his favourite studies. He married young; and after his son was born, the times being propitious for such an undertaking, he determined to put his project into execution.

Accompanied by his wife and family, he reached Athens in safety. Shortly after their arrival Lady Wortley presented him with a daughter, and the most beautiful Greek maiden that could be found was procured from Tino to act in the capacity of nurse. The infant was Ayesha, the nurse Zabetta. When the child was above a year old, and Sir Edward and Lady Wortley were about to return to England,

they one day became alarmed at the absence of the nurse and child. They had been seen walking towards the close of day under the columns of Jupiter Olympius, and from that time all traces of them were lost. Sir Edward immediately set on foot every sort of inquiry, offered large sums, despatched messengers throughout the country,—but all to no purpose. In the mean while Lady Wortley, who at first had borne up against the calamity, fell ill, under the thousand conflicting emotions with which such a misfortune would naturally fill her heart. She lived in hope again to see her child; but, as time wore away, that hope was changed to despair. At length it was clearly ascertained that a boat had been wrecked on the rocks of Sunium; fragments of dress were found which were called European; and, in short, so much was said and done, that there was no doubt that the child and its nurse, and whoever might have been their conductor, had perished in the sea.

Sir Edward, alarmed at the drooping health of his wife, thought it much better at once to

cut off all hope, than allow her mind to remain in hopeless uncertainty; and he was right. Although it was long before she recovered, yet Time, the great assuager of grief, eventually restored her equanimity. Any allusion to the loss of the child was strictly prohibited; no one ever mentioned it in the presence either of Sir Edward or his wife; the son was brought up in ignorance of it: in short, the whole event remained buried in oblivion.

Things continued in this state, when, at no long period before Osmond's arrival, a carriage drove up to the door of Sir Edward Wortley's house in Grosvenor-square, and from it alighted the heir of his name and wealth, leading a young person dressed in a costume which had never before been seen in England in civilized life. As it was the season for gaiety, some thought they might be returning from a fancy-dress ball; others, that the fair Circassian had come again into the world. But who can ever express the emotions which filled the breasts of Sir Edward and Lady Wortley, when they received their son and their long-lost

daughter at one and the same moment? Lady Wortley, and indeed her husband, had scarcely recovered from the effects of the sudden joy, when they were called upon to administer relief to their daughter in the same manner, on the sudden apparition of Osmond.

Young Wortley had so often related the story of his interview with the dying Zabetta to his own family, as well as to their numerous friends and relations, that he was considering whether it would not be advisable to print a short account of it, to save the trouble of further repetition. However, he was obliged again to narrate the whole story to his friend, from the moment of Mustafa's arrival to his own departure from Constantinople. He made a faithful report of all the circumstances, many of which being already known to our reader, we will not repeat, but take up his narrative with the event which brought him to the knowledge of his sister, namely, his interview with Zabetta.

"I found the unfortunate woman," said Wortley, "extended on a bed, and death painted on her face in colours not to be mis-

taken. When we were alone, raising herself upon her hand, and evidently making a violent effort over herself, she said, ‘ You are Edward Wortley ; I know you ; I knew your parents at Athens: I nursed you ; I nursed your sister too.’ As you may imagine, I started at this intelligence ; for, although it had ever been supposed that I knew nothing of the loss of my sister, still I had in fact received some intimations of it from different people. ‘ Your sister lives,’ she continued ; ‘ I am a wicked woman ! — oh, will you ever forgive me? Protect her, take her away from this place, lose not a moment, I am dying — there, there she is,’ pointing to the next room—‘ And take these things, they belong to her and you—there, go !’ She continued to talk by short snatches, until I saw her gradually sink and die. She held a locket in her hand, and some coins, which I took from her. As you may suppose, I did not lose a moment in rushing to Ayesha, and, as it was night, I conveyed her at once to the palace. I consulted with the Ambassador what was to be done : he advised me instantly to

hire a swift-rowing boat, to proceed in all haste to one of the king's ships at anchor off Tenedos, and there to take refuge; until that was done, he assured me, I could not call my sister safe. Accordingly we acted up to his injunctions; we embarked that very night, she under an European disguise, and reached the ship in safety. The ship soon sailed for Malta, and from Malta to Portsmouth, whence we reached our home without the smallest accident. The only drawback to our happiness was anxiety about you; but, as I had despatched Mustafa a short time before to Rhodes, I concluded that there could be no doubt of your speedy liberation."

"And you and Ayesha escaped the plague, my dear Wortley!" exclaimed Osmond with great emotion.

"It was indeed a wonderful interposition of Providence in our favour," said Wortley;—"escape it we did, and most miraculously; for, by a letter which I received from Trompetta the other day, it appears that every one else who approached that devoted house,

fell a sacrifice to the fatal disorder. But I must read you that letter; it will give you the history of what took place after our departure, and also throw some light upon the fate of your enemy Cara Bey. Accordingly, taking from his pocket Signor Trompetta's letter, he read as follows.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE the honour to inform you, that the day after your departure from the British palace, his Excellency the Kislar Agassi, or chief of the black eunuchs, went in state, on the part of his Majesty the Emperor, to the house of Zabetta Kadun, for the purpose of bearing off with him her supposed daughter, your amiable sister, that she might become the favourite sultana. You may guess, sir, the surprise and dismay of that officer, when, instead of a young and blooming bride, he found nothing but death and putrefaction. Zabetta lay dead in her bed, and her servant-maid in the last agonies beside her. The Kislar Aga immediately retreated from the scene with

horror, and went to his imperial master to make a report of what he had seen. As there was nobody in the house to say whither the supposed daughter had gone, although a very active search was instituted, no discovery was made. The whole circumstance produced a great sensation throughout Constantinople at the time, but I am happy to say it has entirely subsided so far as regards your sister, although it has excited the Sultan's wrath against the Capitan Pasha, who has utterly lost the good graces of his Majesty, and may perhaps also lose his situation, if not his head.

"I am happy to inform you, that the Cara Bey question has been agreeably settled. In consequence of the application of the Russian Ambassador to the Porte, in which that minister complained of the insult offered to his imperial master, in allowing so great a delinquent to go about with impunity as the accredited officer of one of the high dignitaries of the state, and in consequence of our representation also, the said Cara Bey has been

ordered to leave Constantinople, and has been sent to work as a convict in the arsenal at Rhodes. In this case we cannot complain of the want of good faith in the Reis Effendi; but I am sorry to hear that Mustafa Tatar has been detained for some time at Guzel Hissar, and that, I fear, by the order of the government. But now, as there can be no object in his detention, he will be allowed to proceed, and I hope that, ere this, the letters of which he was the bearer, have produced Lord Osmond's liberation.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"ANTONIO TROMPETTA.

"P.S.—We hear that the Greek priest, brother to Zabetta, is dead of the plague: this fatal disorder is daily gaining ground here."

The whole town was very soon apprised of the circumstances which we have just recorded. It became as great an object to obtain a sight of the beautiful Ayesha, as it ever is to see any curiosity imported into England. Luckily, the principal lion-hunters were

out of town, or else she might have regretted the seclusion which she had enjoyed as a Mahomedan; indeed, as it was, so strongly had the practice of keeping the face concealed from the gaze of man taken root in her mind and habits, that throughout life she never entirely overcame it. Osmond was soon blessed with a sight of his parents, who, under the circumstances in which he was placed, eagerly hastened to him; and, the hearty sanction of all parties having been given to his union with his lovely mistress, nothing but the necessary formalities delayed the completion of his happiness. The foundation which Osmond had laid for Ayesha's conversion from Mahomedanism to Christianity, had not been in vain; her mind, as it were by instinct, threw off its errors, and became renewed by truths which were congenial to it. She had originally been christened by the name of Mary, and to that name she reverted, although she insisted upon undergoing a second time the serious and imposing form of baptism.

It was intended that Wortley should return to Constantinople, as soon as the marriage cere-

mony should be over; and he was charged by his friend to seek out those who had been in any way interested in his fate, and to advance their fortunes in the best way he could. To Mustafa he sent so large a present in money, that he could not fail to secure a handsome pelisse to his back, and an amber-headed chibouque, not to mention pillau and kabob, for the rest of his days. But it was for Hassan, his deliverer from prison, the preserver of his life, that he was the most solicitous. He gave Wortley minute directions how to discover his place of abode, and recommended that, whenever he could procure for him some situation, Mustafa should be despatched with the intelligence. And for the satisfaction of the reader we must tell him, that, not long after, Osmond was rejoiced to hear that his friend had been taken into great favour at the Porte, and from having been made the *kiayah*, or deputy, of the Pasha of Kars, was in the course of time invested with the pashalik itself, and had the proud honour of seeing two horses' tails carried before him for the rest of his days.

As for old Suleiman, although he had been a principal agent in the tragedy of Ayesha's abduction, still, in consideration of the affection with which he had always treated her, Osmond entreated Wortley to take him also under his protection; and he was in time, after having made his pilgrimage to Mecca, installed in the situation of chief of the law in his native place. The poor Israelitish tooth-drawer was liberated from the arsenal at Rhodes; the life of the Pasha who had been so unskilful in nautical evolutions, was saved; and every person who had been, directly or indirectly, concerned with either Osmond or Ayesha, was rewarded and protected.

As for Stasso, he became a sort of foreign major-domo in his master's establishment, or, as we might say, the foreign department was placed in his hands; and whenever he was tired of England, he went to Constantinople, where he was always sure to find an asylum in the Embassy.

A more brilliant marriage-ceremony had never been seen in London than that which

will bring our narrative to its close. A series of fêtes succeeded. One of the principal dancers, and he who was specially appointed by the happy bridegroom to lead off the dance with the bride, was a handsome young Russian, — no less a person than our old friend Ivanovitch, who was attached to the embassy in England, and had arrived just in time to witness his friend's happiness. That happiness, which had been preceded by so much misery, let us assure the gentle reader, was as great and as lasting as the instability of so frail a possession in this world would allow it to be; and in drawing our history to its conclusion, we feel that we may fairly say, few were ever so happy as Osmond and Ayesha.

THE END.

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